

Edenton-Chowan Schools  
Board of Education Meeting  
Tuesday, September 12, 2023  
6:30 p.m.

Chowan Middle School  
Media Center  
2845 Virginia Rd.  
Tyner, NC 27980

## MINUTES

The Edenton-Chowan Schools Board of Education met on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, 6:30 p.m. at the Chowan Middle School Media Center. The following Board Members were present: Chairman Gene Jordan, Vice-Chair Ricky Browder, Sherronne Battle, Paul Clifton, George Lewis, Lisa Perry, Joan White, and Superintendent Dr. Michael Sasscer.

Others attending the meeting were: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Auxiliary Services Dr. Jana Rawls; Directors representing Central Services; Community Members; Board Attorney Will Crowe; and Board Clerk Sarah Hare.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Browder gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by students from Chowan Middle School.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Ms. Battle to approve the agenda as amended to include the Student Board Member Report. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Clifton. The motion carried unanimously.

**Student Board Member Report** - Ms. Ambrosio-Reyes and Ms. Armstead presented their monthly Student Board Member Report.

**Superintendent's Report** - Dr. Sasscer presented his monthly report including the following items:

The Board of County Commissioners approved to increase our USDA loan for the high school project to \$35 million. M.B. Kahn has submitted the required documentation to request additional USDA funds for the high school project.

Mr. Mebane and Dr. Sasscer have researched the capability of recording our board meetings through Google Meet. Google Meet does have a record option. Mr. Mebane and Dr. Sasscer are going to test the record feature to ensure we can produce a quality recording before making a recommendation to the Board.

School has been in session for two weeks and already our students are engaged in transforming experiences. 10 out of 12 internship students have started work, while the other two are waiting to interview at ECU Health. Our FFA Vet Science Teams from John A. Holmes High School took 1st and 2nd place in last week's Federation Vet Science Competition. Student-athletes are competing successfully highlighted by our undefeated women's tennis team. Around each corner, teachers, coaches and staff are creating opportunities for our students to shine!

Our percentage of low-income students continues to rise. Compared to the 2020-21 school year, John A. Holmes has seen a 32.7% increase, Chowan Middle a 19.9% increase, D.F. Walker a 12.2% increase and White Oak a 4.5% increase in economically disadvantaged students. As poverty increases, how students come to school prepared to learn changes too. Our teachers are doing more today to help our students regulate their emotions and tend to their basic needs.

Last Wednesday, the State Board of Education approved testing and accountability results from the 2022-23 school year. As a reminder, the State counts achievement data (or "grade-level proficiency") as 80% of the total school performance grade and growth 20%. Our results from last year, shown on the screen, show the difficulty in overcoming the challenges of lost instructional time due to multiple factors, including COVID, discipline, and staff shortages. Achievement data remain low for those subgroups who, beginning in the 2020-21 school year, experienced a different learning environment or returned to school with increased behavioral, social and emotional needs. Either factor diminished the amount of instructional time these students were engaged with learning activities. Our students learn and perform best when we maximize their time in the classroom.

John A. Holmes High School is to be celebrated for "meeting growth." They have met growth for 3 out of the past 4 years and their 62 school performance grade is the third highest during the current accountability model. As the screen shows, John A. Holmes is a leader in the region.

Due to 2 out of 3 schools receiving a D letter grade, our district will be designated by the state as a low-performing district. The plans presented to the Board tonight will assist DFW and CMS in what will be required to submit to the State in October. Our team will present more details in our October meeting. Prior to the release of these data, Principal Sharon Meads and Principal Angie Walston proactively worked with staff to re-energize a culture of excellence. Each school developed a universal support plan to address improvement areas in our instructional delivery, curricular planning and learning environments. Additionally, each school drafted a school improvement plan with strategic goals to 1. eliminate opportunity gaps 2. improve school/district performance and 3. prepare educators to be future-ready. We are realistic about our challenges and optimistic about our plans and initiatives.

Students from Chowan Middle School shared some of their goals for the upcoming school year.

There was no public board dialogue.

#### REPORT:

NCSBA Annual Conference - Ms. Sarah Hare, Board Clerk, shared information with the Board regarding the upcoming NCSBA Annual Conference.

#### CONSIDER

Vision Impaired Contract Service - Ms. Lori Heginbotham, Director of Exceptional Children, presented a vision impaired contract from Allied Instructional Services, LLC for the Board's consideration. A motion was made by Ms. Perry to approve the contract as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously.

Capital Project - Softball Lights - Dr. Sasscer presented a recommendation to the Board to consider for approval the Musco quote to replace the softball lights at John A. Holmes High School. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis to approve Dr. Sasscer's recommendation as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Clifton. The motion carried unanimously.

Capital Project - Heat Exchangers - Dr. Sasscer presented a recommendation to the Board to consider for approval change order #1 to Schneider Electric's contract to replace the heat exchangers at White Oak Elementary School and D.F. Walker Elementary School. A motion was made by Mr. Lewis to approve Dr. Sasscer's recommendation as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. Battle. The motion carried unanimously.

School Improvement Plans - Dr. Sasscer, along with the Principal of each school, presented the school improvement plans for the 2023-2024 school year. A motion was made by Mr. Browder to approve the school improvement plans as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously.

2023-24 School Fees and Fundraisers - Dr. Sasscer and the Principals presented the proposed fees and fundraisers for the 2023-24 school year to the Board for consideration. A motion was made by Ms. White to approve the fees and fundraisers for the 2023-24 school year as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Clifton. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendments - Ms. Sandy Pittman, Chief Finance Officer, presented budget amendments 17-19 for the Board's consideration. A motion was made by Mr. Browder to approve the budget amendments as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. Battle. The motion carried unanimously.

A.R. Chesson Award - Dr. Sasscer presented the bid from A.R. Chesson for the Technology renovations for the Board's consideration. A motion was made by Ms. White to approve Dr. Sasscer's recommendation to accept AR Chesson's bid to renovate the Technology Facility. A second to the motion was made by Ms. Perry. The motion carried unanimously.

Board of Education Policy Revisions - Parents' Bill of Rights (First Reading) - Dr. Sasscer presented the Parent's Bill of Rights policy revisions for a first reading.

## CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis to approve the following items on the consent agenda as presented. A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously.

1 - Minutes

- August 15, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes
- August 31, 2023 Emergency Board Meeting Minutes

## 2 - Personnel Report

- September 12, 2023 Personnel Report

## 3 - Financial Report

- School Board Report - August 2023

## 4 - School Resource Officer Agreement

There were no additional board member remarks/comments.

A motion was made by Mr. Clifton at 8:42 p.m. to enter into a closed session to discuss a confidential matter and a personnel matter as permitted by North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11 (a) (1) and 143-318.11 (a) (6). A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board returned to open session at 9:18 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Perry to approve the September 12, 2023 Student Transfer Report as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Clifton. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon Dr. Sasscer's recommendation, a motion was made by Mr. Lewis to retain Sharon Meads as the Principal of Chowan Middle School without a plan for remediation. A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously.

With there being no further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Perry to adjourn the meeting. A second to the motion was made by Ms. White. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting concluded at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Jordan, Chairman

Michael Sasscer, Ed.D., Secretary