

WESTMORELAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
MONTROSS, VIRGINIA
BOARD MINUTES
January 24, 2022

The Westmoreland County School Board met in regular session on Monday, January 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Gerald B. Roane Center for Excellence Building, Montross, Virginia.

Present:

Mr. Ralph Fallin, Chair
Ms. Iris Lane, Vice Chair
Mrs. Katherine Lewis, Member (participated virtually)
Mrs. Sandra Ramsey, Member
Dr. Daniel Wallace, Member (participated virtually)

Others Present:

Dr. Michael Perry, Superintendent
Ms. Cathy Rice, Deputy Superintendent

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fallin, Chair.

Board Member Mrs. Ramsey made a motion that the Board convene into closed session as provided in Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia, for the purpose of discussing personnel matters dealing with specific personnel of the Westmoreland County School division pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) of the Code of Virginia.

Board Member Dr. Wallace seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye

At 6:00 p.m. the meeting was reconvened into public meeting on the motion by Board Member Mrs. Ramsey and seconded by Board Member Ms. Lane.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

The motion for the approval of the following certification was made by Board Member Dr. Wallace and seconded by Board Member Mrs. Ramsey.

WHEREAS, the Westmoreland County School Board convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712(D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

The Board listened to a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. presented by Washington & Lee High School Senior, Amaya Warner. Dr. Perry prayed and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mrs. Ramsey read the Westmoreland County Public Schools' mission and vision statements to the public.

Organization of the Board

The Board completed its annual organization.

Dr. Wallace made a motion that Ralph Fallin serve as Board Chair. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Mr. Fallin thanked Board members for supporting him as Chair, and for supporting one another, conducting business in a very professional manner.

Dr. Wallace made a motion that Iris Lane serve as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ramsey.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Dr. Perry recommended Tina Withers as Clerk of the Board and Cathy Rice as Deputy Clerk of the Board. Dr. Wallace made a motion to approve these appointments. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ramsey.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Ms. Lane made a motion to appoint Daniel Wallace as the Representative and Sandy Ramsey as the Alternate for the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Lewis.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Dr. Wallace made a motion to appoint Iris Lane as the Representative and Ralph Fallin as the Alternate for the Northern Neck Technical Center. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ramsey.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye

Dr. Wallace made a motion to appoint Iris Lane as the Representative and Ralph Fallin as the Alternate for the Northern Neck Alternative Education Program. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ramsey.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Delegations/Presentations

Attendance Recognition

Dr. Perry shared the attendance recognition for November. The school with the highest student attendance was Cople Elementary with an average percentage present of 93.78%. Staff attendance was not presented this month.

Character Honorees

Ms. Rice presented the Character Trait honorees for the month of December and the trait of Kindness. Students recognized this month included BrantLee Blackwell in kindergarten at Cople Elementary; Camryn Jones in grade five at Washington District Elementary; Teagan Clarke in grade six at Montross Middle School; and Abigail Bennett in grade twelve at Washington & Lee High School.

Bus Driver Recognition

Ms. Rice presented the bus driver honorees for the month of December. Florence Bell, Sarah Thompson, and Cathy Veney were recognized for outstanding service.

Virginia Department of Health Update

Dr. Richard Williams, Director, Three Rivers Health District, provided an update from the Virginia Department of Health. Dr. Williams shared that things are looking better nationally and in the Commonwealth. The Omicron variant peaked several days ago, with cases now decreasing. Case numbers are still very high but moving in the right direction. Hospitalizations in Virginia have stabilized, and deaths from Omicron are less than with other variants. Case counts in the Three Rivers Health District are also decreasing from a high of 2,163 cases the week of 01/10/22 to 1,642 cases the week of 01/18/22. Community transmission levels remain high across the Commonwealth, Three Rivers, and in Westmoreland County.

Dr. Williams shared that Virginia's vaccination status is slowly increasing, with 68.6 % of residents fully vaccinated. The percentage of Middle Peninsula residents vaccinated are 32.5% for ages 5-11, 46.4% for ages 12-15, and 52.1% for ages 16-17.

Three Rivers continues to conduct COVID-19 testing in the local health departments by appointment. The demand for testing has fallen off. Three Rivers also continues prioritized containment (case investigation/contact tracing).

Dr. Williams shared that on January 15, 2022, Governor Youngkin issued Executive Order (EO) Number Two. This EO permits parents to opt out of mask mandates and rescinds Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in PreK-12 Schools. It further requires issuing new guidance. Mitigation and defense against COVID shifts from masking to other layers of prevention and mitigation. On January 21, 2022, the VDH published Revised Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Virginia PreK-12 Schools.

School Funding Formula

Mr. Norm Risavi, County Administrator, provided information about Westmoreland County revenue and the School Funding Formula. Mr. Risavi shared that property values are re-assessed every six years, and this was the year for re-assessment. This will result in a bit of delay in receiving the real estate rates. Mr. Risavi shared that a challenge being faced by the county deals with personal property. Most of the personal property assessments are on vehicles. Current law prohibits reducing the vehicle rate because the other personal property rates cannot be higher than vehicles. Senator Stuart will introduce legislation to permit reducing the rate on vehicles without penalizing the other categories. The values of vehicles have increased significantly with the re-assessment due to impacts of the pandemic on supply and demand. This may also impact sales tax for the county, as one of the largest sources of sales tax revenue is a car dealership. An unanticipated positive consequence of the pandemic is that an increased number of people came to live full-time in their second homes, generating more sales tax revenue in the county.

Mr. Risavi shared the tax rates and revenue collected county-wide for the current fiscal year. County-wide taxes cover the general operating budget for the county. Colonial Beach residents contribute to the county-wide revenues. He then shared the school division rates and revenue. Mr. Risavi stated that to get the school division rates/revenue, one takes the total county-wide tax revenue and subtracts off Colonial Beach to get the assessed values for Westmoreland County Public Schools. The Colonial Beach figures represent what would be collected if Colonial Beach residents were attending Westmoreland County Public Schools. By statute, the county provides this figure to the town of Colonial Beach and then the town applies this to the town's tax bill.

Mr. Risavi shared that, by statute, the county must identify all sources of revenue for the school division. This includes levy revenues and non-levy revenues. Non-levy revenues are those collected solely outside the town of Colonial Beach. Each beginning year of each biennium, the percentage of sales tax to be distributed to Westmoreland and Colonial Beach is calculated based on the percentage of the school-age population that lives in each district, based on figures provided by the Weldon Cooper Center. Mr. Risavi then described each additional source of revenue.

Mr. Risavi shared the history of the School Funding Formula. He also described revenue challenges that result from having a separate town school system within the county. He also commented on the high cost of services provided through the Comprehensive Services Act.

Open Public Comment

There were no public comments submitted in advance of or during the meeting.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Wallace made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Lane seconded the motion. Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

- A. Approval of Appointments & Resignations
- B. Approval of Board Minutes
- C. Approval of Bills

Action Items

Donations to Schools

Dr. Perry shared a donation that had been made to the schools. Mrs. Ramsey made the motion to accept the donation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Authorized Signer for the Northern Neck Regional Alternative Education Bank Accounts

Dr. Perry requested that the Payroll Specialist, Sheila Hostler, be add as an authorized signer for the Northern Neck Alternative Education Program Bank Accounts. Mrs. Ramsey made the motion to approve Mrs. Hostler as an authorized signer, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Lane.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

VSBA Code of Conduct for School Board members

Chair Fallin presented the VSBA Code of Conduct for School Board Members. Mr. Fallin noted one change from previous versions. The current version does not reference the national association. Dr. Wallace made a motion to approve the Code of Conduct as presented. Mrs. Ramsey seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Budget Resolution

Ms. Rice presented a budget resolution requesting that the Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors appropriate additional federal funds to the 2021-2022 School Board Budget in the following amounts:

- **Title III (Carryover):** \$6,283.16
- **Title III (Award Increase):** \$2,095.98
- **ARP ESSER III (Award Increase):** \$3,188.49
- **CSLFRF (HVAC) (New Award):** \$288,918
- **Bus Driver Incentive Grant (New Award):** \$13,682.33
- **Gear Up Virginia (New Award):** \$27,000

Mrs. Ramsey made the motion to approve the budget resolution as presented. Dr. Wallace seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: 5 Ayes/0Nays; Mr. Fallin, Aye; Ms. Lane, Aye; Mrs. Ramsey, Aye; Mrs. Lewis, Aye; Dr. Wallace, Aye.

Information Items

CSLFRF (HVAC) Grant

Ms. Rice shared that the division has been awarded a CSLFRF (HVAC) Grant in the amount of \$288,918. These funds will be used on combination with ARP ESSER III funds to replace 17 HVAC units at Montross Middle and Washington District Elementary Schools.

Bus Driver Incentive Grant

Ms. Rice shared that the division has been awarded a Bus Driver Incentive Grant in the amount of \$13,682.33. These funds are to be used to address the bus driver shortage. Funds will be used to provide referral bonuses to drivers who refer a driver applicant who is subsequently hired, and to incentive recruitment of new drivers and/or retention of current drivers.

Security Equipment Grant

Ms. Rice shared that the division has been awarded a School Security Equipment Grant in the amount of \$132,468. These funds will be used to install a keyless entry system at Cople Elementary, Washington District Elementary, and Montross Middle School.

Facility Update

Dr. Perry presented a Facility Update. This included photographs of construction progress at the Westmoreland High School site. Dr. Perry also shared that considerable work is being done by the Technology Department for the new Westmoreland High School. This includes ensuring correct installation of the Promethean boards, and coordinating integration of broadband, security cameras, phones, switches, firewalls, etc. The Technology Department has also been working on a transition plan for moving items from the current high school to the new high school. Dr. Perry indicated the school division is looking at options for installing a marquee. Dr. Perry noted what he anticipates as the final potential change order to include grading the football field, completing the track, putting up a fence, and putting in foundational infrastructure for the future.

Upcoming Events

Dr. Perry shared upcoming events for Board members.

- January 24-25, 2022 – VSBA Capital Conference – Richmond
- February 8, 2022 – VSBA Title IX Best Practices – Charlottesville
- February 16, 2022 – Communication Forum – SBO
- March 11, 2022 – VSBA March Hot Topic Conference – Bristol
- March 23, 2022 – Board Development - Charlottesville
- April 20, 2022 – VSBA April Hot Topic Conference – Charlottesville
- June 2, 2022 – VSBA School Law Conference – Richmond
- July 19, 2022 – VSBA Conference on Education - Richmond
- July 30, 2022 – Westmoreland High School Convocation - Montross

School Board Member Comments

Ms. Lane shared that she attended a Northern Neck Technical Center Equity Committee Meeting. She requested that Board Members share with her any input they would like to provide for the committee's work. She will convey the input at upcoming meetings.

Dr. Perry re-affirmed for the public that on January 5, 2022, the Westmoreland County School Board held a Special Called Meeting and voted to keep the universal mask mandate in place for all students and staff. He also re-affirmed for the public that the School Board continues to take public comments, which may be shared in-person at a Board Meeting or submitted in advance in writing. Lastly, Dr. Perry acknowledged the passing of a retired food service worker, Lula Alice Brown.

Date & Time of Next Board Meeting

Chair Fallin shared the dates/times of the next Board Meetings:

- Budget Work Session - Tuesday, February 8, 2022 - 5 p.m.
- Budget Work Session – Monday, February 28, 2022 – 4 p.m.
- Regular School Board Meeting – Monday, February 28, 2022 - 6 pm

Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mrs. Ramsey, seconded by Ms. Lane, and unanimously approved by Board Members to adjourn the meeting.