

October 5, 2020

The Board of Education of the County of Kanawha met in Special Session on Monday, October 5, 2020 at the Board of Education Building, Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 4:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Becky J. Jordon, President  
Tracy White, President Pro Tem  
Ric Cavender  
Jim J. Crawford, Sr.  
Ryan White  
Thomas E. Williams, Secretary

Debra J. Lewis, Recording Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Mark Milam, Deputy Superintendent  
Paula Potter, Asst. Superintendent, High Schools, Technical & Adult Education  
Amon Gilliam, Asst. Superintendent, Middle & Alternative Schools  
Mellow Lee, Asst. Superintendent, Elementary  
Carol Hamric, Executive Director, Human Resources  
Briana Warner, Communications Director  
Leah Sparks, Executive Director, Technology  
Alicia Warden, Health Services  
Valery Harper, Executive Director, Virtual Schools  
Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel  
Alan Cummings, Executive Director, Purchasing & Supply Management  
Diane Miller, Executive Director, Office of Child Nutrition

## **PERSONNEL**

### A. Personnel Agenda for October 5, 2020 (Enclosure 32)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Revised Personnel Agenda as included in Enclosure 32. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### A. Kanawha County Public Library Board of Directors

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the appointment of Mr. Charles Kenneth 'Ken' Sullivan as a Director of the Kanawha County Public Library to complete the unexpired term of Ms. Debra Sullivan for the term ending June 30, 2026. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve Dr. Mickey Blackwell for another six-year term as a Director of the Kanawha County Public Library, which such six year term to end June 30, 2026. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

### B. Refrigerated Box Truck (Enclosure 33)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the purchase of a 2021 Freightliner Refrigerated Box Truck from Matheny Motors in the amount of \$123,504.00 per bid 21-114 as shown in Enclosure 33. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford.

Dr. Williams-We have freezers that go out periodically and we lose everything in them, so this will help with that. It will also help with the compartmentalized lunches we are doing and it would have helped with the boxed lunches we did this summer. This will also help with food delivery. It will be kept at Riverside can be used and mobilized anywhere in the county.

Mr. White-Did we only get one bid? Dr. Williams-I think we had 29 vendors that were contacted. Alan Cummings- We had 29 that were contacted and we had one response. Matheny Motors is the territorial Freightliner dealer. It also came in under budget.

The above motion unanimously carried.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### A. Dual Credit Policy (Enclosure 16)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the revised Dual Credit Policy as shown in Enclosure 16. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

### B. Virtual School Policy (Enclosure 17)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the revised Virtual School Policy as shown in Enclosure 17. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford.

Dr. Williams-This policy will bring us in line with what our current practices are. Valery Harper-The big change was expanding it to the Kindergarten level.

The above motion unanimously carried.

## **DELEGATIONS**

Dinah Adkins, KCEA-We need our classrooms to be safe. We must social distance in the classroom. We must continue to closely monitor the use of masks and cleaning procedures in our schools. Our members want to be in school but no one wants to endanger our students or educators. After reports of increased positive tests and some citizens going to multiple sites for testing in order to increase the number of positive tests and the statistics, our School Board and the public should be alarmed and outraged. If teachers become ill who delivers the education? If service personnel become ill who transports students or prepares meals? There is no backpack plan. If teachers are working remotely or are quarantined they can often continue to teach through eLearning and there are few subs that can step in. Are you identifying employees at Central Office who can take their place if they become ill? Education can't go on as if nothing has happened. A few cases of COVID will create a domino effect. Since the Board had already voted to reentry with blended learning, Kanawha County Schools has acted and a blended model has been implemented. The Board now has the responsibility to continue the blended or go back to the remote model. Five full days of instruction cannot be an option. KCEA is asking that you rely on accurate numbers and that you develop a plan when and if teachers become ill and there is no one to deliver instruction. We are asking that you talk to employees. Remote eLearning is the safest alternative for everyone. Please don't consider returning to five day in person.

## **DELEGATIONS (continued)**

Lorie Lewis-I am the proud mother of 3 eLearners. I was very pleased with how we were doing with eLearning. I understand after speaking to Dr. Williams and Mrs. White that they said this was only for 2 weeks. I'm here because I'm concerned that this won't end in 2 weeks and we won't be receiving our 5 days of instruction. I hope that this doesn't happen every time the color changes and that we will not follow a blended model. I hope you will bring my children back to 5 days.

Allen Stump, WVEA-My main concern is this map coloring. People have lost faith with what color the map is from week to week based on the belief that numbers are being manipulated. WVEA has filed an injunction over this hoping that we would get more accurate map colors in the future with Kanawha County specifically the concerns is are our numbers really better this week compared to last week or are they really the same? I do understand a lot of the community would like to have their kids back in person for 5 days, however a lot of those people are going to have to set in a small classroom that is overcrowded There is absolutely zero chance that you can social distance in a classroom. I would encourage you to listen to your employees and their concerns when making your decision.

Mrs. Jordon-Our Board will continue to discuss the re-entry and when Mr. Throckmorton arrives we will allow him to come up and speak too.

Dr. Williams-As far as today is concerned when I was on my way to work this morning I saw buses and that was the first time since March since I had seen that and it made you feel good to know that kids are back where they are supposed to be. We had relatively few calls here today. We did meet this morning with some people from the Health Department and got some insight from Dr. Young. People were scared when the map came out and they had forgot what the process was.

Jerry Throckmorton, AFT-I am here to express a couple of member concerns. First of all is the ever-changing Governor's map. When that map changes you don't know if that info is reliable or not. That has everyone on edge. One of the concerns is the level of preparedness. We know some schools are better prepared than others. Some have handwashing stations in the hallways and some do not. Some places are still waiting on supplies. I feel pretty good in my school at Sissonville High. I commend my Principal for that. I'm not sure everyone is as prepared as we are.

## **DELEGATIONS (continued)**

Teacher assignments is another issue. It's hard enough to have one consistent job and now you are asking some to have multiple job responsibilities. The placement and the responsibilities just get piled on when you have people that are stressed enough. I had quite a bit of response from athletic people. No one wants my kids to be out there representing their community more than me but you have to be concerned about their safety. Some coaches have sent me some information asking how concerned are we when we are conditioning one week then all of a sudden you are playing 3 games within 10 days. Some coaches have said they weren't much involved in the process as well as the athletic directors. They are upset over that process. They are concerned over the rush to get these games in. Lastly, some concerns about what the blended schedule will look like in the long term. I hope when we get past these 2 weeks and we make a decision to stay blended that we can tweak that a little bit to make it more effective.

Mr. White-If a coach believes it's unsafe to play then they can always cancel right? Dr. Williams-Yes. The coaches, the athletic directors, the principals and myself were in a conference call with Dr. Potter last week in case this schedule did change. I know the athletic directors and the principals were the ones who made the schedules.

Mrs. Jordon-Did the WVSSAC change the rule that you can't be fined for canceling?  
Paula Potter-No, really all of those rules are null and void right now.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### A. Re-Entry Discussion

Mrs. White-I'm not in support of the color map. We have to have something to go by to determine when we go back to school. We have people that are saying I chose to send my kids to 5 days a week. You have people who say it's not safe to send that many kids in a classroom. When I got up this morning I went to welcome kids at Kanawha City Elementary because I wanted to be there. Those kids were so excited to get back to school. One little girl literally skipped into school. I went to the classrooms and watched how they were doing breakfast and watched them teach how to social distance in line. That's why we were blended this week so they could teach those things. I don't think we need to take 2 weeks to learn our new process. While I was there we had a student that wasn't feeling well and that school had the Group Me text, they contacted the nurse, brought the student in, they made sure he wasn't labeled as having COVID. Mom hadn't filled out the emergency card but within 20 minutes that stuff went into action to get a hold of that parent and have that student picked up and gave her the guidelines as what to do next. I feel like our teams have done everything possible to be

## **OLD BUSINESS (continued)**

prepared for what's next. There's a huge rumor going around that we are going to vote to stay blended. I don't know where that came about. Today after being at Kanawha City I feel that the parents that chose that 5 days really want their kids back in school. That's our decision to decide whether we keep that or change that.

Mr. Crawford-I'm quite comfortable with the blended schedule for the first 2 weeks. If we continue to stay in the same color that we are now I wouldn't hesitate to have them stay on blended because of the number of cases we have in this county. My main concern is to protect the students and the staff. There haven't been very many complaints. I know there are some people that won't them back full time but I don't see us doing that at the present time because of safety reasons.

Tracy White-Can you explain what happened at Horace Mann? Dr. Williams-I can't be really specific because of personnel issues but we had several teachers that had been exposed to a person that tested positive and then we had some teachers in other grade levels that had been exposed as well and the subs were not available. They wouldn't know the routine of the school and how things are going to be moving around. It was decided that it would best for them to remain remote this week. Tracy White-So if it happens in others schools then we are prepared? Dr. Williams-Yes, we have protocols in place.

Mr. Cavender-So as a eLearning parent myself, there was some confusion over following the blended schedule So they are following the A-L, M-Z schedule for the next 2 weeks correct? Dr. Williams-Yes. Mr. Cavender-Secondly, I want to go back to our tour at Riverside two weeks ago. She showed us a lot of those classrooms and frankly the blended schedule would provide enough safety as far as the Health Department is concerned. When we go back to the 5 day it's going to be really tough with those larger schools with the number of students that signed up to go back full time to maintain the social distance guidelines.

Mrs. Jordon-Isn't it 60% to 70% that is signed up at Riverside? Tracy White-We asked her how many for in person and she said around 750 students. Mr. Cavender-I think we do have to take the time to analyze and see how things are going to go.

Mr. White-What would you say the percentage of students is that haven't made the online classes? Dr. Williams-We have 8 elementary and 12 middle school students who haven't participated in class. The high school is much higher, probably 175 and they are searching for those kids. However, in a normal year we have students who don't show up and don't come back to class. We try to find them and we can't. I don't know if this year is any different.

## **OLD BUSINESS (continued)**

Mr. White-What is the average attendance rate of these online courses? Dr. Williams-I can't answer that question right now. Mr. White-Based on my experience with my school it's decently high. We have a bunch of broadband issues and those are the students that I am concerned about. When we did this last year they got zero instruction and I think we are doing a better job this year but some of those students can't get any instruction without being in person. Those are the ones that I am concerned about. I think everyone needs to go out and get tested. I think we need to encourage people to do that so we can get our numbers down. People keep saying we need to go blended until things get better. When is that going to get better? We need to learn to live with COVID. We have to have 5 days of instruction a week.

Mrs. White-Personally, my son has autism and he's a student at South Charleston High School and the State put out a thing that said if you were a special education student and they couldn't learn virtually or receive their services virtually they were able to go back to school and we made the choice for him to go back. Not all of our kids who can't learn virtually are in special education. A lot can't learn online but they don't have IEPs. They have to be in a classroom. I'm worried about them falling through the cracks. I have received so many emails and texts and I still stand behind wanting our kids back 5 days a week. I'd like to see us do away with the second week of blended. I think we are learning the process this week.

Mrs. Jordon-Our high school kids are missing out part of their life they will never get again, our elementary kids are missing out on skills they can't get on eLearning. They are missing out on athletics, band, etc. I'm not medical, I don't know what Mrs. Warden knows or Dr. Marsh. We can't change the color map but I also feel like we need to put our eyes on the kids. If a parent isn't comfortable then let them do eLearning. I have educated parents that say it is hard. They are not teachers.

Dr. Williams-We have over 13,000 families that voted to send kids in person. One thing we need to keep in mind is that we have to be flexible. In these times we have to be. If we stay 5 days a week and we see that our numbers are going up and the Health Department says you should go blended or back to remote then that is what we can do. The kids need a routine and normalcy. The kids that have attempted suicide over not being in school breaks your heart. I was hired to do what is in the best interest of the kids and I think that is what we are doing. Our team has put together a good plan. Schools across the country are going back in session. We have protocols in place to work with issues that arise. I think we need to keep the kids in 5 days a week as long as we are able to. I think we need to stick with the current plan and see how it goes.

## OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Mrs. White-If you feel we can't do 5 days, is it possible for you to make that call? Dr. Williams-I think as Superintendent of the system it's my responsibility to do what's best for kids. I will always confer with you. If something comes up at the last minute, then we could have an emergency meeting. If we couldn't I would make the decision and live with the consequences. If you didn't like it you could have a meeting and undo it.

Mr. Crawford-This thing is not stable. We could be back in orange or red next week. I think we need to take it week by week to see what we can do and wait until the middle of next week and see where we are and make a decision whether we will bring those kids back in the classroom. That's what I prefer. I think we need to be very careful. I don't want us to see us bring the children back in the system and go person to person and have several outbreaks.

Dinah Adkins-You reiterated that you voted on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and if I remember correctly you voted on 2 weeks of blended and then to reevaluate and decide what you needed to do. I think you owe it to the students and teachers and service personnel to stick with that. This is very little time to determine what's going to happen. We are not playing games and this could get bad. I know you are in a tough spot but I'm asking you to wait and do what you said you would do.

Mr. Cavender-We have a meeting next Thursday which would be the Thursday before we are supposed to go back 5 days a week. Couldn't we have the reevaluation conversation next Thursday? Dr. Williams-Sure, I think we have been reevaluating in every meeting we have had. Mr. Cavender-At that point we will have almost 2 weeks of information from teachers and principals.

Mrs. White-It's my understanding that you were contacted today by one of our assistant superintendents who said there were quite a few that they wanted 5 day. Dr. Williams-I did receive quite a few teacher comments today saying they wanted kids to go back 5 days next week. Mr. Cavender-I'm getting those messages too but I'm also getting just as many saying they don't want to.

Lucinda Burns, Point Harmony Teacher-Dr. Williams said that 13,000 students chose to be face to face and they wanted to do that 5 days a week but my question is how many of those were single family parents that has no choice. My daughter is one of those. She doesn't want them in school and I don't want them in school but we don't have another choice.



## **OLD BUSINESS (continued)**

Mrs. White-Our high schools and middle schools are over 50%. They don't need childcare at home. They want to go back to school. Blended is hard for working parents. Mrs. Jordon-Do you want to keep it blended until next Thursday to see where we are? What do you recommend? Dr. Williams? I think Mr. Cavender's idea is a compromise. It will give people time to think about it.

Mrs. White-I'm ready to make a motion and let us vote.

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board amend the county reentry plan to move out of the blended model of instruction and into a 5 day instruction either in person or eLearning starting October 12, 2020 as opposed to staying in blended instruction for one additional week. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White.

Mr. Cavender-I was just interviewed by WCHS yesterday and was asked if we were going to be voting on anything and to my knowledge we were not voting on anything today and that's what I told them. I wasn't aware we were actually considering a vote today. I didn't see the motion Mrs. White has. There is nothing on my table.

Lindsey McIntosh-The Motion doesn't have to be on the agenda.

Mr. Cavender-We voted on August 3<sup>rd</sup> to give them two weeks. For the people that are confident that they want to go back, there are just as many people that are scared to death go back. We have to speak for everyone. I felt like our August 3<sup>rd</sup> decision was a very good compromise. Mrs. White-On the same token our August 3<sup>rd</sup> decision was to come back one week staggered so if we are technically going by what we voted on August 3<sup>rd</sup> then we should be one day a week per grade at this point. We also voted for the first week to be staggered.

Mr. White-I don't like the way our blended schedule is working now. If we are going to do anything blended it needs to be 5 days of instruction. I'm in favor of getting rid of that one week. It will help everybody in my opinion. If we did do blended for the rest of the semester I'd push for every day of instruction.

Mrs. White-My concern is the eLearning parents they are very upset and confused. They are very adamant that they chose eLearning 5 days a week and they are upset. They don't feel they should be blended at all. Mrs. Jordon-Parents want an education every single day. Like Mr. White said we have to get used to living with COVID. We can't just quit educating kids. Mr. White-It's already starting to get better. We just need to continue to be vigilant.

## **OLD BUSINESS (continued)**

Mr. Cavender-It's starting to get better yes but that's one reason why is that we haven't had hundreds of students sharing an indoor space at one time. We don't know, that's why we needed a two week evaluation. Mr. White-We have seen studies across the nation that are saying that classroom transmission is less than the general community. Mrs. White-We are the last county in West Virginia to go back. I think we do look at others to see how they are doing when they went back 5 days a week.

Dinah Adkins-Will the Board Meeting next Thursday be open to everyone and there will be no social distancing? Mrs. Jordon-We will continue to social distance in this room. Dr. Williams-That's what the Health Department has recommended for us to do. Dinah Adkins-You can't do it in a classroom. Mr. Cavender-How can we expect to tell our teachers to social distance if we are not? Mrs. White-I asked that in a meeting today with the Health Department and I was told that under an executive order that our schools were allowed to. Dinah Adkins-We want you to follow the CDC Guidelines. Go in a classroom and see how crowded it is.

Mrs. White-I don't think waiting is going to give us more accurate numbers than we currently have.

Mr. Cavender-We represent teachers, students, and the public. I will tell you that the most messages that I have received say please continue the blended for at least now. Of course working parents that don't have other options it will be in their best interest to be in 5 days a week but the teachers are the ones on the front lines exposing themselves. That's why I thought that our vote on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was the best option as a compromise for everyone. I'm confused why we are doing this. I knew nothing about it.

The above motion carried 3-2 with Mr. Crawford and Mr. Cavender voting No.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION**

### A. Employee Discipline

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board adopt the findings and conclusions of the hearing examiner and approve the Superintendents recommendation for dismissal of Thomas Bass, and Thomas Bass shall be, and he is hereby, terminated from his employment with the Kanawha County Board of Education, effective immediately. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

**QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Mr. Cavender-When will the signage for West Side Middle be completed. Dr. Williams-I'll check on the lettering tomorrow. Mrs. White-Have students been given the opportunity to choose their mascot? Dr. Williams-No, today is their first day back. Mrs. Jordon-I would like to thank the Kanawha County Sheriff Deputies for coming out this week and making sure our kids get to school safe. It's also important that all of our parents fill out emergency cards online or at the school.

**ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETING DATES**

- A. Monday, October 5, 2020, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- B. Thursday, October 15, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- C. Monday, November 2, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Riverside High
- D. Thursday, November 19, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- E. Monday, December 7, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary
- F. Thursday, December 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session

NOTE: The above meetings of the Kanawha County Board of Education, unless otherwise indicated, will be held in the Board of Education Building, 200 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Tracy White moved: That the Special Session of the Board be adjourned. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried. The Special Session was declared adjourned by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 5:25 p.m.

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President

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Secretary

djl

10/16/2020