

**RITCHIE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
RITCHIE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION OFFICE
HARRISVILLE, WV
FEBRUARY 22, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Ritchie County Board of Education was called to order on Monday, February 22, 2021, at 6:01 PM by President Dr. Torie Jackson.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dr. Torie Jackson, President
Mrs. Betsy Wells, Vice-President
Mrs. Misty Ingram-Keen (Via Telephone)
Mr. Ryan Reed
Mr. Denver Nelson

Administrative Staff Present: Mr. James G. Brown, Superintendent

*All Board Members, Administrative Staff and Newspaper Representatives remained six feet apart to meet social distancing requirements.

MINUTES

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Mrs. Wells, to approve the preliminary minutes of the regular meeting of February 8, 2021. Motion passed unanimously.

PRINCIPAL SCHOOL UPDATES

Mrs. Lamp, Principal Ritchie County Middle School reviewed the following information:

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges for teachers has been transitioning to virtual teaching and learning how to instruct both in-person and distance learning students simultaneously. Technology access from home has been a challenge but has improved with the installation of hotspots. The Technology Department has provided support for both teachers and parents of distance learning students. We now feel comfortable with our instruction for both groups of students.

Supporting the Social and Emotional Needs of Students

Our counselor, Mrs. Martin, conducts teams meetings with distance learning students as well as face-to-face meetings with in-person learning students. The addition of a full time nurse has been wonderful. She conducts all contact tracing, evaluates student health issues and communicates effectively with administrators and parents.

Positives

With the exception of one position we are fully staffed this year. New classes added this year include reading enrichment, 5th grade band and a career exploration class for 8th grade students. A full time alternative education teacher has been a great addition. Our current attendance rate is 95% and chronic absenteeism is down. The iReady data is not where it would be in a regular year but overall there have been some gains.

Mr. Clevenger, Assistant Principal Ritchie County Middle School reviewed the following information:

Efforts to Assist Our Students

Teachers are available to answer questions, phone calls, emails, and messages, even after hours. We make consistent weekly phone calls to families of students who are struggling. Our counselor has reached out to at-risk students and stays in constant contact with them. Through the Microsoft Stream platform teachers have been able to record and save their teams meetings for students with limited internet access.

Leading Indicator

One leading indicator is the absence of direct in-person instruction. We have started a test prep program called Super Saturday. This is conducted through the Microsoft Stream platform and students can earn prizes through participation. The iReady and CIA data is used to formulate topics for grade levels. We believe this will help combat loss of direct in-person instruction and help us stay ahead of learning deficits.

Lagging Indicator

We have been monitoring the lack of success of some of our Option I and Option II students during the first semester. In addition to our Super Saturday Program, we are looking forward to the summer school program to help attack some of the deficits that students have faced during the first semester.

Mrs. Waggoner, Principal Ritchie County High School and Chris Wells, Assistant Principal Ritchie County High School reviewed the following information:

Challenges

One challenge on the high school level is keeping students at home motivated and engaged. Technology access from home is a challenge but has improved with assistance from the Technology Department. Submission of assignments has been a challenge. Teachers say they are not receiving assignments when students say they have submitted them. Learning to communicate through LiveGrades, email and Apple Schoolwork has alleviated much of this problem. One

of the biggest challenges is athletics. It consumes a great deal of time making it difficult for to preform classroom walkthroughs. It is hard to find a balance between athletics and the educational side of being an assistant principal.

Supporting the Social and Emotional Needs of Students

The addition of a second counselor has been wonderful. The counselors have made numerous phone calls reaching out to students and assisting with needs such as food, shelter, etc. In talking to the students we find they miss the normalcy of high school; the Homecoming Dance, Spirit Week, Prom, etc. This lack of normalcy is taking a toll on their emotions. We are trying to make their high school experience as normal as possible.

Efforts to Assist Our Students

Some teachers create their own videos and some use YouTube videos for the teams meetings. Teachers are available to answer questions, phone calls, emails, and messages. The counselors are setting up meetings with seniors to assist with the FAFSA, Promise Scholarship registration, scholarship applications, etc. We have been able to have one tutoring day and it was very successful. Students who need to meet with a teacher may come in on Wednesdays. Credit Recovery, ACT camp, TASC program, and meetings with parents all help with keeping students on track.

Leading Indicators

Seniors who did not have the opportunity to take the SAT last spring were able to take it in October. In March we will administer the PSAT to the 9th grade. In April the PSAT will be administered to the 10th grade and the SAT to the juniors. In comparing the English and math PSAT scores of this year's juniors, we realize the need to improve in the area of English. We believe that specific bell ringers, SAT review, and ACT camp will help bring those scores up.

Positives

This year teacher collaboration has improved as well as teacher / parent communication. Discipline issues are down. So far, there are 14 students (12%) from the Class of 2021 who have qualified for the Promise Scholarship. When asking students to list positives this year we find that: college bound students feel the blended learning format is beneficial in preparing them for college, seniors have less anxiety with their senior project presentation, students who miss school can get their assignments online and not fall behind, teams meetings offer less distractions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, Mrs. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, that the Board enter executive session. Motion passed unanimously and the Board entered executive session at 6:51 p.m.

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Mrs. Wells, that the Board re-enter regular session. Motion passed unanimously and the Board resumed regular session at 7:29 p.m.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Brown reviewed the following information:

School Building Authority of WV 2021 Needs Grant Update

- Thirty counties have submitted projects to the School Building Authority
- The SBA has approximately \$51,000,000.00 to disperse
- Our interview will be held on March 15th
- We are looking forward to the opportunity to speak regarding our project and what it means to Ritchie County
- The funding meeting will be held on April 19th

COVID-19 Update

- We have four students who are on quarantine, one student in isolation, two employee out on quarantine and one in isolation. This is the lowest number we have seen in months.
- We were required to submit a survey indicating the percentage of our regular employees who will have received both doses of the vaccine by March 1, 2021. Our percentages include:
 - Professional Personnel over the age of 50 = 59%
 - Service Personnel over the age of 50 = 53%
 - Professional Personnel under the age of 50 = 41%
 - Service Personnel under that age of 50 = 37%
 - Total = 48% of regular employees (does not include substitutes and contracted services)

State Board of Education Meeting

- There will be a special State Board of Education meeting held tomorrow at 10:30. Some of our staff will be listening in.
- One item on the agenda is in-person learning. We are not sure if distance learning students will be required to return to in-person learning.
- We have had conversations internally on how to prepare for the increase in student numbers in bathrooms, classrooms, stairwells, buses and lunchrooms, should all students be required to return to in-person learning

CONSENT ITEMS

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, Mrs. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, to approve the following consent items. Motion passed unanimously.

- Approve Student Internship at Ritchie County High School 2nd Semester 2020-2021 School Year
- Approve Off Campus Practice Facilities Tennis Courts at Myles Stadium in Pennsboro and Harrisville Town Park for the 2021 Season

PERSONNEL

Employments or Transfers and Rescissions

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, Mrs. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Reed, that the Board approve the following personnel actions. Motion passed unanimously.

- Approve April Haught, Authorized / Certified (Non-Paid) Assistant Track Coach at Ritchie County High School for the 2020-2021 School Year
- Approve Ted VanScoy, Authorized / Certified (Non-Paid) Assistant Track Coach at Ritchie County High School for the 2020-2021 School Year
- Approve Noah Laugh, Authorized / Certified (Non-Paid) Assistant Tennis Coach at Ritchie County High School for the 2020-2021 School Year

ALLOWED AND AUTHORIZED PAYMENT OF BILLS

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, Mrs. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, that the Board approve and authorize payment of the following bills. Motion passed unanimously.

- Approve payment of bills in the sum of \$196,402.41
- Approve monthly payment to Union Bank for Energy Performance Contract in the sum of \$10,531.90

FINANCIAL REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, that the Board approve the following financial request. Motion passed unanimously.

- Approve Budget Revision Requests: Transfer in the amount of \$81,469.00

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING

Mr. Brown stated that Charlene Coburn, Grant Facilitator Community in Schools Program, will be on the agenda for the March 8, 2021 meeting to explain the program and answer any questions we may have.

BOARD MEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

NEXT REGULAR MEETING DATE

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, March 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at Ritchie County Board of Education Office. Individuals who wish to attend this meeting virtually must request a link by emailing rcsboardmeeting.ritchie@k12.wv.us by Friday, March 5, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Mrs. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:51 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.