

Minutes

Anson County Board of Education
Monday, March 31, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting

Anson County Schools' Administrative Board Room

The Anson County Board of Education met in a regular session on Monday, March 31, 2025. Board members present were Marilyn Bennett, Lisa Davis, Carol Gibson, Frank Liles, Bobbie Little, Judy Little, Beulah Pratt, Kelly Sheppard, and George Truman. Others in attendance were Dr. Brian Ratliff (Superintendent), Dr. Josh McLaurin (Executive Administrator), Mike Flake (Board Attorney), and Anne Hyatt (Board Clerk).

Call to Order

Dr. George Truman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Invocation

Judy Little gave the Invocation.

Adopt Agenda

The board voted to adopt the agenda with an amendment to add New Business at the beginning of the open session, with a motion by Frank Liles, seconded by Beulah Pratt. The motion carried.

Approve Minutes

Carol Gibson moved to approve the meeting minutes for February 24, 2025. Judy Little seconded the motion, which was approved by the board and carried.

Closed Session

Chair Truman asked for a motion to go into a closed session. Lisa Davis made a motion to go into closed session at 5:02 p.m. to consider a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of the Board pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143.318.11 (a)(6) and to discuss the acquisition of real estate or to discuss the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property according to North Carolina General Statute 143.318.11(a)(5). The motion was seconded by Judy Little and approved by the board. Motion carried.

There was no action taken.

Reconvene Open Session

The Board returned to open session at 6:00 p.m. upon a motion by Bobbie Little. Frank Liles seconded the motion, which was approved by the board and carried.

New Business

Kaboom Agreement: Lisa Davis made a motion to accept the Kaboom contract proposal. The motion was seconded by Beulah Pratt. Kelly Sheppard recused herself from the vote. The board approved the Kaboom Agreement with an 8-0 vote. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Holly Stegall is a family physician from Atrium Health and a parent. She stated she is present today to share her disappointment and discouragement regarding the events surrounding a new playground for Peachland-Polkton Elementary School. She stated that even though the PPES PTO secured funding, they feel as though they encountered roadblocks along the way from district administration. She said her biggest concern was the lack of transparency, which creates great angst for her and other parents and grandparents. She explained that the board's motions tonight impact the children, and they need the board to be fully vested in their education.

Dr. Truman asked Dr. Travis Steagall to come to the podium and asked him when the playground would be in place, and Dr. Steagall stated June. Dr. Truman requested Dr. Steagall to keep the board apprised of updates.

Chair's Report

Corey Ross gave an update about the entrance/exit at Anson High School/Anson Middle School. The last report stated that there wasn't enough traffic for an expansion. Dr. Truman said a staggered dismissal will not work due to students getting home late. Mr. Ross said there is a willingness from DOT to meet to have further discussion about the concerns.

Dr. Truman welcomed Jamie Caudle (County Commissioner) to the meeting. He stated that he and Dr. Ratliff plan to meet with county commissioners tomorrow at 6:00 p.m.

Carol Ann Gibsn asked about the presentation on the money shared by Dr. Roseboro last month, and what money was new or old/recurring. The two that Joy said she knows are new are Plasma Games and the Golden Leaf Grant. Joy noted those are state and local dollars.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ratliff recognized the students in the audience and thanked them for being at the meeting.

Middle School Project: Mr. Randy Baker was present to share an update on the new middle school project. He explained the project is still on budget, and money is still left in allowances. He said it is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2026.

Student Learning: Dr. Ratliff explained that emphasis has been and will continue to be student learning and developing leadership, and everything else falls underneath those categories. He said his focus is on all children, and he will continue to make them our focus.

Dr. Ratliff said he and Dr. Roseboro talked today about slowing the train down and working aggressively in areas of priority with student learning. He said our journey in our school community is "We Are Anson". He said everyone in our school community, each person, has a responsibility to work together with compassionate hearts, and that rests with the adults. Dr. Ratliff stated that we are on the cusp of moving forward and see the possibilities become probabilities. He said we have a long way to go, and we won't get there unless we take steps together and manage our own egos. Dr. Ratliff explained that we are here to serve and not to be served; that is the mindset we need to have.

He suggested a retreat and strategic planning to the board. Dr. Ratliff mentioned that everything we do is intentional, intelligent, with a lot of energy, and collective decisions where we come together to benefit our students the best. He said our students in this county are second to none, and it's time for us to start behaving that way, as if our students are second to none.

Kelly Sheppard asked about Super Saturdays. Dr. Ratliff said the rescheduled date is May 3. She asked if community members were invited to be there and if there was training. Dr. Ratliff noted there may be community members who can help, but Dr. Brown has already done the mentor training, which is for our school community who were trained. He said there would be information generated for the community to be involved and other opportunities as we go along.

Lisa Davis asked about where we are with the alternative school process. Dr. Ratliff said he is getting ready to meet for the entire alternative education program, and they have already met with SPCC. He said he does not see us in a place where we are ready to have an individual school due to a housing issue, and we need to develop our programs. He said it would be more of a phase-in where you layer programs, where we meet the needs of students, and where it's not just for disciplinary issues. Dr. Ratliff said he has thoughts about where it might be housed, but given the timeline and what Mr. Baker shared with us, this will be something we will need to have future discussions about.

Lisa Davis said that, in light of recent tragic events and knowing that we only have a limited number of guidance counselors and social workers in our schools, are we looking to add personnel in those areas? Dr. Ratliff said he has not said there needs to be an uptake in volume. He stated that we could utilize what we have and look at funding sources and current funds. He said there are other support opportunities and grant opportunities that we could look at to increase staffing. He explained that schools and principals are good at sharing those resources.

Consent Items

Frank Liles made a motion to approve the consent agenda items (Personnel Report, Budget Amendments, Sole Source Justification Form, Revised 2025-2026 School Calendar, and Graduation Cords and Endorsements). There was no second, and Dr. Truman suggested the board return to closed session to discuss the concerns.

Closed Session

Frank Liles made a motion to go into closed session at 7:20 p.m. to consider a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of the Board pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143.318.11(a)(6) and to discuss the acquisition of real estate or to discuss the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property according to North Carolina General Statute 143.318.11(a)(5). The motion was seconded by Carol Ann Gibson and approved by the board. Motion carried.

There was no action taken.

Reconvene Open Session

The Board returned to open session at 7:24 p.m. upon a motion by Frank Liles. Marilynn Bennett seconded the motion, which was approved by the board and carried.

Consent Items

Upon a motion by Carol Ann Gibson, seconded by Judy Little, the board approved the following consent agenda items (Personnel Report, Budget Amendments, Sole Source Justification Form, Revised 2025-2026 School Calendar, and Graduation Cords and Endorsements). Motion carried.

Adjournment

Frank Liles moved to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. Beulah Pratt seconded the motion, which was approved by the board. There was no discussion, and the motion carried.

Dr. George Truman, Chairman

Dr. Brian Ratliff, Secretary