

Minutes
Anson County Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Monday, March 27, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
Anson County Schools' Administrative Conference Room/Board Room

The Anson County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, March 27, 2023. Board members present in-person were Marilyn Bennett, Lisa Davis, Carol Gibson, Frank Liles, Bobbie Little, Judy Little, Beulah Pratt, George Truman and Mike Turner. Others in attendance were Howard McLean (Superintendent), Marty Godwin (Assistant Superintendent), Anne Hyatt (Board Clerk), Mike Flake (Board Attorney) and Pete Swails (Technology).

Call to Order

George Truman opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Invocation

Mike Turner gave the Invocation.

Adopt Agenda

Mike Turner made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Marilyn Bennett and approved by the board. Motion carried.

Approve Minutes

Special Called Meeting 02/20/23

Regular Meeting 02/27/23

A motion was made by Mike Turner to approve the special called meeting minutes of February 20, 2023 and the regular meeting minutes of February 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by Carol Gibson and approved by the board. Motion carried.

Closed Session

A motion was made by Mike Turner to go into closed session at 4:06 p.m. The motion was seconded by Carol Gibson and approved by the board. Motion carried.

There was no action taken.

Reconvene Open Session

The Board returned to open session at 5:16 p.m. upon a motion by Lisa Davis. The motion was seconded by Carol Gibson and approved by the board. Motion carried.

Recognition

Anson High School Winter Athletes and Teams were recognized for their accomplishments by the board.

Public Comment

Emily Hasty was present to speak to about concerns with Anson Middle School and shared a copy of her speaking notes (attached) with the board.

Chair's Report/Board Member Engagement

Several board members mentioned they attended the annual transition fair at the high school and he explained how wonderful the event was and how well it was organized. The board also mentioned seeing the dental van visiting our schools and what a great opportunity it is for our students. Members also stated they participated in Read Across America at Wadesboro Primary and other schools. Dr. Little said she provided breakfast for the early morning athletes that work out at Anson High School. She said we need to continue to bring the community together like what she witnessed at Read Across America.

New Middle School Project Update

Dr. Truman read a statement about the middle school project that included information about the board needing to acquire additional funding due to bids coming in too high. Dr. Truman stated the board is taking no action regarding this project at this time.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. McLean gave reports on the Budget, Current Job Postings, Instructional/Operational Programs, Discipline Report and Community Use of Facilities.

North Carolina Instructional Leadership Academy (NCILA/Relay) – Jennifer Collard

Ms. Jennifer Collard was present to share an update on NCILA. She explained exciting work has been taking place with district-wide walkthroughs with guests from national and regional areas. She said an area they need to work on is teacher lesson planning and using technology appropriately so that there is not an over alliance to technology. She said they met with principals and they had discussions about how to support teachers. Ms. Collard stated they feel like the best thing they can do is provide solid core resources in English and Math. Ms. McLendon shared an update on Math. She said they are seeking to have Math content that is more user friendly so teachers can take a more seamless approach. Ms. McLendon said they are piloting a new Math program and they are trying to find a core Math program that is a best fit and most beneficial for our students. Ms. Collard said they have done a lot of work in ELA since the state switched frameworks to LTRS. She said most teachers will be done with LTRS training at the end of this year. Ms. Collard mentioned that Ms. Angela Adams has been working closely with their team and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), following board policy to identify programs that are researched-based and looking at what the research says. She said principals have narrowed it down to two programs and each department chair at each school will give their input as well as external stakeholders. She stated they will also visit other schools where they can see it being taught. Ms. Collard said the final decision will be made with input from teachers, principals and stakeholders. Ms. Collard said with Science they have met with Discovery Education about coming in to work with them on using Techbook to also align with lessons with teachers and pacing. She said they want to be sure they are being robust and offer a lot of tools for teachers. She said a lot of the programs have slides and information for parents. She explained the other piece of the plan they are working on is with newly hired teachers and to work with them on instructional practices. Mr. McLean said he has had principals and human resources to create a substitute packet that will be resourceful for substitutes.

Consent Items

Chair Truman asked for a motion to approve the consent items. The motion was made by Mike Turner to approve the consent items (Personnel Report, Budget Amendments and RealityWorks Sole Source). Marilyn Bennett seconded the motion and it was approved by the board. Motion carried.

SPCC Board of Trustees Appointment

Upon a motion by Dr. Truman, seconded by Carol Gibson, the board tabled this topic to lay on the table until the April Board Meeting. Motion carried.

6th Grade Placement for 2023-2024

6th Grade return to elementary schools: Mike Turner said he was in favor of 6th grade returning to the elementary schools because it will give Mr. Jackson more freedom. He said parents also want to have 6th grade back at the elementary schools. Lisa Davis said she is in favor of it as well and feels our students perform better at the elementary schools. Dr. Little said she is not in favor of it and the survey that was done in the past and the results were that students would remain at the middle school. She said the true middle school concept is 6-8 grades. Ms. Bennett said she is not in favor of moving 6th grade back to the elementary schools and she thinks we should keep our 6th graders all in one place as a grade level. Mr. Liles said he is familiar with K-5 and he would like for it stay K-5.

6th Grade Academy: Mr. McLean said he is proposing a 6th grade academy where he would take the current Wadesboro Elementary School (WES) building and make it a school for all 6th graders where the focus would be on Career and Technical Education (CTE) that can be a lead-in program for the middle school and high school. Mr. McLean said there will be focus on core subjects and college ready as well as it will have the CTE focus. He explained this can be another option to put all of our 6th graders together with their own principal, teachers, focus on CTE and college and career ready. Mr. McLean asked Ms. Stevens (CTE Director) to share her opinion on the academy with the CTE focus. Ms. Stevens said when she heard about the proposal she thought it was perfect. She said you have 6th graders that will go out and become their own leaders before going to the middle school. Ms. Stevens said she loves the CTE focus because kids learn by doing and when they are given this ability they learn better and they have more fun learning. She said the labs that are being proposed will provide critical thinking for trades. Ms. Stevens said if learning is fun, it's fun to learn. She also mentioned the pathways that are available at the high school. She stated if students don't know what they don't know and if we don't give them the opportunity to try things, they will never know. Mr. McLean said space is not an issue for K-5 at the Wadesboro Primary School (WPS) building and there is plenty of space for the 6th graders at the WES building. Mr. McLean said he has met with transportation folks as well to ensure we have all bases covered. He explained he has talked to educators, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and they seem to think it is a good idea. Ms. Gibson said she has a problem with a focus on CTE but we also need to be sure to gear our students to be college ready as well. Mr. McLean said the program can be set up as they see fit. Ms. Davis said they have concerns with creating another transition year. She said she is concerned about staffing the school if we are already having issues in that area. Ms. Davis asked if parents would get a choice. Mr. McLean said they will move around staff to fill any vacancies.

Parent Choice: Dr. Truman said he would like to allow our parents to have a choice and a voice on where they need to have their child educated. Mr. Turner said he agrees that parents should be given a choice and it shouldn't be mandatory they all attend 6th grade academy or middle school. He said if we don't listen to parents, we will lose more students.

Mr. McLean asked for more guidance on next steps. Ms. Davis said, first and foremost, she thought there was supposed to be a survey before tonight.

Dr. Truman proposed to see where the board stands. Ms. Gibson said to start out by surveying all parents K-5. Mr. McLean asked for guidance on how the board would like to handle surveying parents. Dr. Truman suggested the board narrow down the field of choices and what are the two options that gain the most support. Mr. Liles asked about letting teachers complete a survey.

Dr. Truman said to survey parents on all four options via electronic survey. He said we will table this item until the April 20 budget meeting. Mr. McLean asked for guidance on who is being surveyed. Ms. Davis suggested surveying 3rd, 4th and 5th grade levels and that the survey be provided in other languages. Mr. Liles suggested that we survey teachers. Ms. Davis then suggested surveying 4th and 5th grade parents and teachers. Dr. Truman said we will do an online survey of parents and teachers for 4th and 5th grades. He said phone calls will be made for those families that don't have a way to participate in the online survey. Mr. McLean asked for confirmation that the board would like a survey from everyone on the rosters and Dr. Truman said yes. Dr. Truman said this data needs to be completed by April 20. Upon a motion by George Truman, seconded by Carol Gibson, the board voted to table this topic until the April 20, 2023 board meeting. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by George Truman, seconded by Lisa Davis, the board requested 4th and 5th grade parents and teachers be surveyed on the following choices. Motion carried.

- 6th Grade return to elementary schools
- 6th Grade Academy
- 6th Grade stay at Anson Middle School

Closed Session

Upon a motion by Lisa Davis, seconded by Carol Gibson, the board went into closed session at 7:20 p.m. Motion carried.

There was no action taken.

Reconvene Open Session

The Board returned to open session at 7:35 p.m. upon a motion by Frank Liles. The motion was seconded by Carol Gibson and approved by the board. Motion carried.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was given by Frank Liles at 7:40 p.m. Lisa Davis seconded the motion and it was approved by the board. There was no discussion. Motion carried.

Good evening school board,

My name is Emily Hasty and I am the mother of Griffin Hasty, he is in the 6th grade. I would like to propose the idea of changing the current semester scheduling from traditional to block scheduling. I have recently visited the middle school to see what it is like to be a student. I observed that there is a lot of class work and other expectations in the 60-63 minutes core classes. I feel that if the number of classes were decreased this could help the children complete their work on time and be more efficient in retaining the information that they are learning. As well as give the teachers enough time to instruct more.

I would also like to ask that administrators and curriculum administrators to look into how the teachers utilize Canvas when it comes to the curriculum being taught. There needs to be more information pertaining to the lesson rather than a link to YouTube or the assignment sheet. This is for all the subjects I have looked at this year so far. An example that comes to mind and has been an issue all year is Math. I ask for notes and where I can find

instructions to help Griffin, I get told "just go on YouTube, the lesson is on there!" I don't think this is acceptable as an educator in general. I understand that everything is now primarily electronic, however, if the children use only a Chromebook to do assignments, I would like to see a presentation of step by step instructions of the lesson they are learning, specifically math to ensure my child's learning is being beneficial to him.

Which leads me to my next concern.

I have been told that when the students have a substitute teacher they aren't allowed to get the Chromebooks out. I would like to have a better understanding of this, as I understood the purpose of the Enrichment class was to get caught up on assignments, iready, complete classwork, etc. What are the students supposed to do for the last 45 minutes of class for the day?

I am concerned about the frequent turn over that the middle school experiences. I often wonder how we can fix this. Does anyone know the exact reason for the turn over? Do the school board members,

superintendent or principal have a plan to prevent this from happening in the future? It is stressful as a parent worrying if your child will have a certified teacher for the whole year and the years to follow. My son has currently lost two of his core teachers in less than two months. I simply cannot endure the next two years with the worry that my child's education will not benefit him due to the turnover that is being experienced at the middle school each year. I will have to go another educational route for my son so he can sustain stability for his academic growth.

Lastly I would like to bring your attention to the amount of altercations that take place on a daily basis. This is very concerning as a parent whose child may be in harm's way, while being innocent. I understand that the fighting can't be predicted nor be completely stopped. I would like to see if there is another way to enforce more consequences to help prevent the fighting. Teachers shouldn't have to put themselves in the middle of student fights, and risk being hurt or fired because they put hands on a student. While I wholeheartedly believe discipline starts at home, I know discipline takes up a lot of the

teachers time to get class started only to be interrupted by violence.

I appreciate your time and allowing me to express my concerns for Anson Middle School. I know that Anson Middle has the capability of being a great school with great outcomes. We all just have to work together!