

Gates County Board of Education
October 11, 2021
Regular Session

The Gates County Board of Education met for their regularly scheduled open session on Monday, October 11, 2021 at Central Middle School in the media center. The meeting was conducted by board Chairman Ray Felton. Board members Vice Chairman Ms. Glendale Boone, Mrs. Sallie Ryan, Mr. Leslie Byrum and Ms. Amanda Heimbecker were in attendance. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Barry Williams, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tammy Boone, Human Resources director Mrs. Chante Jordan, and Clerk to the Board Mrs. Jacqueline Davenport.

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m by Chairman Felton. He thanked everyone for attending and began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no public comments.

The motion was made by Ms. Glendale Boone to approve the minutes of the September 2nd and 9th sessions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Amanda Heimbecker. Chairman Felton called for a vote. Each member stated their vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Felton requested to amend the consent agenda by adding the Leandro Resolution and the approval of the continued mask mandate until the November meeting. Mr. Leslie Byrum made the motion to approve the amended agenda. Ms. Amanda Heimbecker seconded the motion. Chairman Felton called for a vote. Each member stated their vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Williams discussed the following topics:

1. COVID 19 Update

Gates County Schools has conducted over 200 COVID tests up to this point in the school year. Mr. Wright updates the COVID Dashboard on Friday mornings. We continue to have active cases in the schools but our numbers are starting to fall and become more stable.

2. StrongSchools Health toolkit Update

The NC Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS) on Tuesday issued an updated Strong Schools NC K-12 Pubic Health Toolkit and a new legal guidance document for schools entitled, "COVID-19 in Schools: Legal Authority and Requirements." The revised Toolkit:

- Extends the current modified quarantine exception which states quarantining is not necessary in cases of close contact if both people were properly wearing masks;
- Provides a summary of legal requirements and control measures such as contact tracing, quarantining, and masking policies

3. Dr. Michael Smith, MD, MSCE, Professor of Pediatrics Duke University School of Medicine

Vaccination Updates:

Pfizer and Biotech submit initial data to US FDA from pivotal trial of COVID-19 vaccine in children 5 to <12 years of age

COVID-19 Cases:

COVID-19 claims more than 675,000 US lives, surpassing the 1918 Flu

1 in every 500 US residents have died of COVID-19

School Reopening:

2 NC School districts require teachers and other staff to be COVID-19 vaccinated

California to be first state to mandate COVID vaccine in schools

4. Dr. Betsey Tilson State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer NCDHHS

Four metrics are leveling off (hospitalizations, positive tests as a percent of total tests, daily cases, emergency room visits)

Case Rates are decreasing across all age groups but still high

Case Rates declining among children with the highest rates in middle and high school children

(3) counties without masks mandates reported 17.2 clusters per 100 schools in those three counties

(89) counties with consistent masks mandates reported one or no clusters

(108) District require masks mandates

5. Saturday Computer lab

On scheduled Saturdays, we are collaborating with the county for very basic and senior focused technology learning sessions. We hope to have a total of at least 150 senior

participants. Location Central Middle School [10/23/21], [11/06/21], [11/20/21], [12/04/21], [12/18/21]

6. NNDCC

Chief Howard and his cadets will be in uniform in front of the high school on Wednesday's.

PT drills the exercises and sync these words together in their cadence code. (Loyalty, Commitment and Honor)

7. Transportation

Bus driver shortage - I received word that we probably had best bus scores in the state, it was confirmed that we were best in the east.

8. Gatesville Roof Project

Contractors are scheduled to return Thurs., Oct. 14 due to testing at Gatesville Elementary School.

Dr. Williams then introduced Ms. Lola Rountree to discuss test scores. Ms. Rountree stated that all of our test scores for the 2021 school year would soon be posted on the NC DPI website. Our LEA had five areas that were average with the state and all of our previous school designations were still on the books, including those that were listed as low-performing. Ms. Rountree discussed a comparison with neighboring Camden County. She said although the demographics are the same, Camden's scores average higher than Gates County. She said it could be because Camden offers a smaller primary school (with just kindergarten to second grade) or that Camden has an early college, but those two things were likely not the only contributing factors. She had no other explanation as to the difference in scores.

Board Report

Ms. Ryan took the opportunity to express her appreciation for the principals and acknowledged her gratitude for the reports they had prepared for the meeting. She stated her regrets she would have to leave before the meeting would end, but ensured those present she would review the power points that had been provided in hard copy prior to the meeting.

Chairman Felton spoke of going to see the Naval cadet unit at the high school. He believes the program will be an excellent addition to the district. Chairman Felton also wanted to acknowledge Dr. Paula Simpson for her work on updating the school website with new Child Nutrition information. He acknowledged the recent short-staffed situation at the schools and thanked her for a job well done.

Special Guest

Dr. Williams introduced Ms. Melissa Riddick, one of the founding members of the Shaun T. Riddick, Sr. Foundation. Ms. Riddick was the wife of the namesake of the organization. Mr. Riddick was a native of Gates County and a 1999 graduate of Gates County High School. While attending Gates County Schools, Mr. Riddick was an active participant in basketball and band. Following his unfortunate passing on November 6, 2011, Ms. Riddick and others decided to join together to continue his legacy of wanting to give back to the community he loved and the educational programs that helped shape his life. They wanted to take this opportunity to introduce the organization and inform the board of their plans to begin fundraisers to help support the basketball and band programs. Members of the board thanked Ms. Riddick for her willingness to share.

Out of District transfers and Releases

Dr. Williams recommended the following:

1. Release of Ethan and Aubree Johnson from Gates County Schools to attend Suffolk, Virginia school system.
2. Release of Nathan Stevenson from Gates County Schools to attend Perquimans County Schools.
3. Madison Belch to attend Central Middle School pending payment of tuition.

Financial Reports

Ms. Pittman provided the board with September and October financial reports. We still do not have a state budget and we will have to continue to use the estimated numbers from last year. We do have a draft school district audit report, however, and Ms. Pittman was happy to report to the board that the daycare center is finally “in the black.”

School Improvement Plans

Principals from each school, except T. S. Cooper Elementary School, presented a powerpoint presentation to the board for their 2021-2022 school year. Below are highlights of each:

1. Gail Hawkins--Buckland Elementary
 - Buckland is committed to providing “PANDA” to each student: Personalized instruction, Accountability, Nurturing environment, Diversity, Achievement and Success for each student.
 - Data-driven interventions are in place with each stakeholder responsible for “promoting growth as evidenced by student performance and assessments”

2. Dr. Shawn Wilson--Gatesville Elementary
 - In partnership with parents, Gatesville Elementary School is committed to educating, nurturing, empowering students to become successful members of the 21st century.
 - Increase proficiency in reading and math, with special emphasis on fourth grade math scores and meeting or exceeding growth for all subgroups.
3. Kelly Eure--Central Middle School
 - Central Middle School shall be an institution where students are challenged and motivated to succeed in an emerging global society.
 - Instructional teams will align instruction with NC Standards and objectives, schedule to intentionally support student achievement, provide emotional support through a guidance program called Social Emotional Learning, and teams will demonstrate and implement school expectations through MTSS/PBIS initiatives.
4. Jonathan Hayes--Gates County High School
 - Gates County High School will work to provide a nurturing educational environment that empowers students to be college and career-ready through use of technology and 21st-century skills.
 - Gates County High School will focus on increasing test scores and building mentor and mentee relationships through programs, such as NNDCC, with an emphasis on citizenship.

Consent Agenda

The following items were approved by the board:

1. Policy 4231/5021/7263
2. Policy 5030
3. Gates County Schools 2021-2022 Schedule of Fees
4. Memorandum of Understanding between GCS and Economic Improvement Council, Inc. (Headstart)
5. Smart Mouth Pizza Oven purchase
6. Gatesville Elementary fundraisers
7. TS Cooper Elementary field trip to Jamestown, Va.
8. Ladies of Distinction implementation at CMS
9. Central Middle School fruit fundraiser (Band)
10. Central Middle School Sherwood Forest fundraiser (BETA club)
11. GCHS band trip to Cary, NC
12. Hunter Safety Education to be included in Agricultural classes at GCHS
13. TS Cooper Elementary fall festival
14. Leandro Resolution (*added)
15. Mask mandate to continue until November (*added)

New Business

There was no new business discussed.

The date of the next regular session was set for November 8, 2021 at Central Middle School.

Mr. Leslie Byrum made the motion to approve the closed session actions. Ms. Amanda Heimbecker seconded the motion. Chairman Felton called for a vote. All board members present stated their vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Byrum then made a motion to approve the board consent agenda as amended with items fourteen and fifteen. Ms. Glendale Boone seconded the motion. Chairman Felton called for a vote. All board members present stated their vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Glendale Boone made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Amanda Heimbecker seconded the motion. Chairman Felton called for a vote. All board members stated their vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.