

**BUENA VISTA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BUENA VISTA, VA**

**SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT MEETING**

**AUGUST 3, 2023**

**5:30 PM**

**W. P. RAMSEY EDUCATION CENTER**

School Board Members present: Teresa Ellison, Wayne Flint, Mac Felts, John Roberts and John Rice. Members absent: Lisa Kerr – surgery recovery and Roy Mohler – vacation. Also present: Dr. Francis, Dr. Miller and Sandra Mohler.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence were observed.

We have no need for a Closed Session. Mac Felts made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. It was seconded by John Rice and passed with a 5-0 vote.

Chair-Teresa Ellison dismiss the public comment part. No visitors were present.

**SCHOOL BOARD RETREAT**

Dr. Francis has 4 major topics this evening.

- 1) **Leave** - Last year COVID leave was available for staff. COVID mandates ran out on 5/31/2023 and there is no need for it this year. Dr. Francis' suggestion is to terminate COVID leave for 2023-2024 school year. Employees will continue to have sick leave.
- 2) **Student Enrollment** – Summary of enrollment for the last 5 years. Have to included enrollment projections in our Comprehensive Plan. There has been a slight decline, except for 2021 year. There was an increase due to COVID. We had 880 because we were in person and other area schools were not. Enrollment runs between 830 – 840. We based this year's budget on 825, so we will be somewhere in that range. We have Kindergarten students this coming year. Pre-K numbers are not included in our ADM. Need to have our kindergarten enrollment to stay around 65-70. Average class size averages around 66 students. Senior class this year has only 44 students. We will not have solid enrollment number for 23-24 until after the first 10 days. A number of home school student have come back. We are maintaining our numbers.
- 3) **JLARC Study** – General Assembly commissioned The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission do a study to see how Virginia stacked up against other states regarding funding education. It's a 79-page report and I am going to hit the highlights. JLARC found the following:
  - A) Virginia school divisions receive less K-12 funding per student than divisions in other states.
  - B) Many of the Standards of Quality formula's inputs and assumptions lack a clear and do not reflect prevailing practice in school divisions.
  - C) SOQ formula does not adequately account for higher needs students, regional labor cost, and division size

- D) Local composite index used to apportion funding obligations between the state and each locality is a reasonable accurate measure of the locality's ability to pay.
- E) Most states use a student-based K-12 funding formula, which is simpler than Virginia's complex staffing-based formula. Any school with less than 2000 students are getting short changed. The smaller you are the more you are impacted.

JLARC developed recommendations and policy options and estimated their funding impacts. Virginia ranks 14 – 18 for the wealthiest states in the nation, which is in the top half. Virginia funds education in the bottom half.

3 main sources for funding - If you look at funding for as a whole – 52% comes from local funds, 9% comes from federal funds, and 39% comes from State funding. Areas with a lot of money can fund their schools at a much higher rate than areas that don't have a lot of money. We received 19% from our local government and 79% from the State. We are on the very low end. The highest divisions are at .8, which means they receive 80% of their funding from their local government. The SOQ formula considers staffing ratio. We are one of the few states that does this. State uses the ratio of 24 to 1 to determine the number of teachers you should have. If you have a high poverty level or high SPED level, you cannot do 24 to 1 and be successful. It short changes divisions based on their student populations. This would mean redoing the whole SOQ formula and could take a while. Sufficient funding is essential for high quality education system. Sufficient funding increases the likelihood of having high quality teachers, which increases graduation rates and student achievement. If we could retain quality teachers, then our student achievement & graduation rates would go up. We would be in a better situation. Poverty level and adequacy of support at home are factors outside the system's control that impacts education. Salary and benefits are the driving factor to ensure the availability of high-quality instructional staff. Virginia divisions receive less funding per student than the national and regional state averages. We are behind, receive \$1900 less per student and that is a total of \$1.5 million (800 x 1900). With this additional funding, we could increase wages. Virginia is 25% behind West Virginia in funding education. Virginia's SOQ formula calculates that divisions need only \$10.7 billion in funding, but divisions actually spent \$17.3 billion. Local governments picked the difference between what the State gave and the amount the division actually spent. Small divisions do not have the ability to spend more. Per student spending tends to be higher in urban and suburban areas, especially in Northern Virginia. SOQ formula figure that Virginia only need 113.5k staff members. But staff actually employed by Virginia divisions are 171.4k, 51% more. Staffing needs are estimated to be 216.1k or 90% more than state estimates. The divisions with money can hire more staff, the ones that don't cannot hire more staff. JLARC recommendations to the State - address technical issues: include all division central office positions. This was cut in 2009/2010. If the State removes the cap, we could receive an additional \$200,000. JLARC recommends getting rid of the SOQ formula and develop and adopt a new simpler formula. Virginia average teacher salaries consistently trail behind the national average. Add an economies of scale adjustment to the SOQ formula to provide additional funding to divisions with fewer than 2000 students. Change the local composite index to be calculated using a 3 yr. average.

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

We have 3 main finding sources, State construction money, facilities account and end of the year funds. We have completed the following improvements: Kling – replaced decking, trailer remodel, new sidewalks and tree removal. Enderly –flooring, changed the locks so the doors can be locked from the inside. Replaced the fencing and installed a storage building, put in new lifts and replaced HVAC units for all classrooms. PMMS - removed the old trailers, added gates at 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> street entrances, shop flooring. Need to replace the roof over the Band area and replace the gym floor. PMHS – Paving, set up baseball/softball field lights, removed fallen fence, replaced the chillers on the HVAC unit. Ramsey Center – replaced the roof and installed a/c in the classroom. Bus lot – paving.

After Board discussion the following project were established as priorities:

Kling-Hot water system

PMMS– replace the gym floor and repair the roof over the band area

PMHS–walking path, upgrade HVAC and boiler repairs

### **Model Policies**

State’s model policies We will need to decide to adopt or not. State’s version does not align with the VSBA policies. It really outlines that parents get the final say on their children because they are minors. If a student come to school and said he want to use a female name, the parent must put it in writing confirming or denying any changes. Must contact the parents if a child has a problem with their gender, unless the student poses an implement risk of suicide. We have an assessment team who would make this determination. The team has received training by State people. Any student can request a single use bathroom. We will continue with one person at a time can be in the bathroom. We don’t require student to dress out for gym. If a student is 18 they are considered an adult. You don’t have to contact parents in this case. Must have a legal document from the court in order to make any changes to a student’s records showing parent’s approval. We are required to adopt these policies.

VASS – Roles of parents – Model policies are final and go into effect immediately. Cannot conceal information from parents about their children’s gender identify, unless there is a risk of suicide. Parent must be involved if child seeks counseling at school because the child is questioning his/her gender ID. Requires an official government record submitted by parent to change school records. School personnel can address a student with a name or pronoun that conflicts with his/her student records, but only if the parent makes this request in writing. Schools cannot require teachers to address students in a way that violates the teacher’s constitutional rights. This is being challenged in court. A student shall use bathrooms that correspond to his or her sex, except to the extent that federal law otherwise requires. Single use bathrooms should be available. Parents can opt their child out of using a bathroom with transgender students. In Grimm v Gloucester County School Board, a federal appellate court ruled that transgender students must be allowed to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity. Athletics – students can only participate based on their sex. VSHL has policy in place to address gender issues. Model policies are directed to school divisions, not the VHSL. So divisions will have to consider how to handle student request to play in sports based on gender identity. The 2021 model policies are null and void. 2023 model policies went into effect on July 19, 2023. Can use sample policy provided or create a new policy or adapt current policies.

Governor could withhold funding if these policies are not adopted. There will be some challenges in court about these policies. The Virginia Code does require divisions to adopt policies that are consistent with these policies. School officials violating any provision of this title shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor if no other penalty is prescribed. State could take legal action against any division that does not adopt these policies My recommendation is we adopt the model policies. I will talk to our attorney to see how to go about this. The Board discussed the options. We have been doing these things all along. The Board will need to vote on this at the August regular meeting.

**Instruction:**

We are still need to fill 2 open positions. We have a plan to make it work until these positions can be filled. Need another 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3 grade teacher due to class size. Plan to move the Success Coach to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as a long term sub. Use a sub to move fill the Success Coach position. Trying to beef up the mentor program to help support new teachers. Letters will go out to parents for all classes except for one. Cannot get staff in the door because our salaries just cannot complete with other divisions.

Chair Ellison made the following announcement:

Whenever a superintendent's contract is being renegotiated, all members of the School Board shall be notified at least 30 days in advance of any meeting at which a vote is planned on the renegotiate contract unless the members agree unanimously to take the vote without the 30 days' notice. Each member's vote on the renegotiated contract shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting per Code of VA 22.1-60D.

Wayne Flint made the motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mac Felts and passed with a 5-0 vote.

Teresa Ellison

Teresa Ellison, Chair

8-24-2023

Date

Sandra Mohler

Sandra Mohler, Clerk

8/24/2023

Date