



Greene County Public Schools  
School Board Meeting Minutes  
August 4, 2021  
WMHS Performing Arts Center  
254 Monroe Drive, Stanardsville, VA 22973

**Members Present:** Ms. Leah Paladino, Chair; Mr. Todd Sansom, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jason Tooley, Member; Ms. Sharon Mack, Member, Mr. Jason Collier, Member, Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk.

**Board of Supervisor(s) Present:** Mr. Steve Bowman, Liaison

Ms. Leah Paladino called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the William Monroe High School Digital Media Classroom.

Mr. Todd Sansom made a motion to move into closed session in accordance with Virginia Freedom of Information Act, sections 2.2-3711 A.1, A.2, A.4 and A.7; Mr. Jason Tooley seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Leah Paladino moved to reconvene in an open session at 7:00 p.m. in the WMHS Performing Arts Center.

Mrs. Leah Paladino stated: The Board certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. Mr. Tooley, Ms. Mack, Mr. Sansom, Mr. Collier and Mrs. Paladino all certified.

Ms. Leah Paladino invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Leah Paladino shared we do have closed meeting action. Mr. Todd Sansom made a motion to approve religious exemption 22-01 and 22-02 that were presented during closed session. Mr. Jason Collier seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Leah Paladino shared the consent agenda items and asked for a motion. Mrs. Mack made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented in the packet. Mr. Todd Sansom seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2021

Expenditures: June 2, 9, 16, 30, July 7, 8, 13, 14, 20, 21, 2021  
Monthly Finance Report  
Enrollment  
Staff to be Approved List

Ms. Leah Paladino stated it was time for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. She also shared that there would be a time for public comment after each information item listed on the agenda. Ms. Leah Paladino opened the floor for public comment.

Angelo Lagana shared some questions and concerns regarding the K-12 2021-2022 curriculum.

Tom Boyd shared concerns and questions regarding US Department of Education Guideline that was sent to school systems in April called COVID-19 Handbook.

Gretchen Stelling addressed the board regarding the questions that had been asked.

Dr. Bryan Huber presented action item 11-1090, May 2021 VSBA Policy Updates. Dr. Huber shared the policy updates were presented at the June 2021 school board meeting. There has been one change to policy GCL on Professional Staff Development. Added to this policy after our meeting from VSBA is specific language representing VA Code 22.1-298.7 and notes that training is not required for staff until the beginning of 2022-2023 school year. Ms. Mack made a motion to approve the May 2021 VSBA Policy Updates as presented. Mr. Sansom seconded. Mr. Sansom shared concerns regarding Policy GCL. Mr. Sansom proposed an amendment to the motion that was made setting aside GCL and GCN. Ms. Paladino restated the amended motion to approve the May 2021 VSBA Policy Updates as presented with the exception of GCL and GCN. Mr. Tooley seconded. No board discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Kristie Spencer presented information/action item 11-1091, VPSA Technology Grant. Ms. Spencer shared details of the grant and explained the procedural component.

No public comment.

Mr. Sansom made a motion to approve the VPSA Technology Grant as presented. Ms. Mack seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Bryan Huber presented information/action item 11-1092, Annual Compliance with Standards of Quality Report. Dr. Huber shared the school division has met the Standards of Quality for the 2020-2021 school year.

No public comment.

Mr. Sansom made a motion to approve that we are in compliance with the Standards of Quality Report. Ms. Leah Paladino restated Mr. Sansom made a motion that we approve the Annual Compliance with Standards of Quality Report as presented. Mr. Tooley seconded. No board discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh and Dr. Kyle Pursel presented information/action item 11-1093, Health Protocols – FY2022 School Year. Dr. Kyle Pursel gave an overview of where we are now with students returning to school, where we have been and where we are going and what our current metrics look like. Dr. Pursel

shared guidance from Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Education and Center for Disease Control. Dr. Whitmarsh shared four possible options regarding mask wearing for the 2021-2022 school year. Mask will be required on buses per the US Department of Transportation.

Ms. Leah Paladino invited those who signed up for public comment and reminded everyone of the three-minute time limit.

Jonathan Sjordal is a parent of five children one of which is still in Greene County Public schools. He shared his concerns with students having to wear a mask.

Buddy Barre thanked the board for everything you did for our children last year. He also shared concerns with students having to wear masks or being social distant.

Steven Kortepeter spoke against students having to wear mask.

Morgan Kortepeter is a parent of a rising kindergartener. She shared her concerns with kids wearing mask and shared her daughter's experiences.

Mallory Lamb shared her concerns for students having to wear mask. Supports masks being optional.

Gene Godbold is a parent of high school student shared he is an expert on COVID and gave details of his experiences. Supports no masks.

Renee VanAllen is a parent of kindergartner. She shared concerns with students wearing mask and not being able to see faces.

Rachel Anderson is a parent of WMHS senior. She shared concerns with students having to wear a mask. Should be individuals choice.

Cathryn Silman is a parent of three in Greene County Public Schools. Thankful county making it possible for our students being able to go to school 2020-2021. She supports mask wearing.

Chelsea Mapanoo is a parent of five children that attend Greene County Public Schools. Not in support of mask wearing.

Jennifer Miller is a parent of ninth graders. Thanked the board for their great experiences last year. Shared concerns with students having to wear mask. She asked the board to give them a choice.

Alex Sharf is a rising senior at William Monroe High School. She does not support mask wearing.

John Anderson asked two questions of the board regarding the mask options and HIPPA and the other regarding vaccination mandate for those attending school.

Ms. Leah Paladino asked if there were any more public comments.

Ms. Leah Paladino replied to John Anderson's questions.

John Anderson spoke again about the options.

Ms. Leah Paladino read options:

1. Requiring face coverings indoors for all students, staff, and visitors PK - 12.
2. Requiring face coverings for all students, staff, and visitors who are unvaccinated.
3. Requiring masks at times when students may be transitioning or in large gatherings.
4. Allowing face coverings to be optional and strongly encouraging all unvaccinated students, staff, and visitors to wear them.

Mr. Sansom ask for clarity from administration.

Dr. Whitmarsh responded and also stated no discussion of mandating vaccines.

Ms. Leah Paladino closed public comment.

Mr. Collier spoke regarding the options and that one and four are the only viable options.

Board member discussion.

Mr. Tooley made a motion allowing face coverings to be optional and encourage all unvaccinated students, staff, and visitors to wear them.

Ms. Paladino commented that whatever the option is to recognize that the school and district level leadership is charged monitor the health and safety metrics on an ongoing basis and adjust mitigation strategies as appropriate. We are meant to make sure the community understands that's how it's normally done. The operations of the building are the prevue of the Superintendent and Staff. They have the broader view of health statistics.

Mr. Sansom stated I'll seconded the motion by Mr. Tooley.

Board member discussion.

Mr. Collier spoke in favor of mask being optional.

Mr. Tooley spoke in favor of mask being optional.

Ms. Mack spoke in favor of mask wearing.

Discussion of members of the audience.

Ms. Paladino spoke in favor of mask wearing.

More board member discussion.

Mr. Tooley spoke regarding mask wearing.

Suggestion from audience regarding motion.

Ms. Leah Paladino asked about altering motion removing the word unvaccinated.

Mr. Tooley agreed to amend the motion allowing face coverings to be optional and encourage all students, staff, and visitors to wear them.

Ms. Leah Paladino asked if anyone would object to adding the comment about district leadership monitoring the health and safety metrics on an ongoing basis and will adjust mitigation strategies as appropriate or necessary.

Board discussion.

Ms. Paladino stated for public record it's a curtesy almost that we are involving the board in this decision. In Virginia the role of the Superintendent is the operations of the building in conjunction with her staff or his staff normally the kind of decisions they would make. Because of the nature of this decision and the importance as community we make a decision together. Dr. Whitmarsh thought it was important for us to have this conversation.

Mr. Sansom respectfully disagreed and shared concerns. He stated inserting that language undercuts our authority.

Ms. Paladino stated this is not our authority it's not the role of the school board. I'm glad we have this discussion and we have this decision to make.

More discussion between board members.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated I'm responsible for the daily administration of the school division. Dr. Whitmarsh stated we included that because I think conditions could change. It doesn't need to be in there. More conversation between Dr. Whitmarsh and Board.

Mr. Tolley agreed with Mr. Sansom this under minds the board. Also stated motion is out there so by Robert's Rule we need to vote on motion.

More board member discussion and discussion with Dr. Whitmarsh.

Ms. Leah Paladino stated motion allowing face coverings to be optional and encourage all students, staff, and visitors to wear them.

3 Ayes; Mr. Sansom, Mr. Collier & Mr. Tooley

2 Nos; Ms. Mack, Ms. Paladino

Motion carries.

Dr. Whitmarsh thanked everyone for attending. She gave an update on student orientation, new staff, enrollment, and summer programs. Next Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> first day of school.

Ms. Mack thanked everyone for emails and engagement. Thanks for the civil crowd.

Mr. Tooley echoed Ms. Mack. Great crowd, great input. Looking forward to first day of school.

Mr. Collier thanked everyone for attending. He stated he looks forward to having a good strong year and he appreciate the student comment.

Mr. Sansom addressed Angelo Lagana and Tom Boyd. He shared he appreciated the Superintendent releasing email regarding CRT.

Ms. Paladino adjourned meeting at 9:32 pm.

Sean M Paladino

Chair

Bhanda M Houchens

Clerk