

**Lynchburg City School Board  
Regular Meeting  
March 15, 2016**

**BOARD  
MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Mary Ann Hoss, Chairman  
J. Marie Waller, Vice Chairman  
Sharon Y. Carter  
James E. Coleman  
Regina T. Dolan-Sewell  
Michael J. Nilles  
Derek L. Polley  
Jennifer R. Poore  
Katie K. Snyder  
Stephen M. Farmer, Student Representative, E. C. Glass High School  
Javon T. Calloway, Student Representative Pro Tem, Heritage High School

**BOARD  
MEMBERS  
ABSENT:**

None

**ADMINISTRATION  
PRESENT:**

Scott S. Brabrand, Superintendent  
John C. McClain, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning and Success  
Ben W. Copeland, Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Administration  
Anthony E. Beckles, Sr., Chief Financial Officer  
LaTonya D. Brown, Director for Student Support, Behavior, and Alternative Education  
April M. Bruce, Director for Data, Assessment, and Accountability  
David A. Childress, Director for Information Technology  
Jason J. Ferguson, Director for Transportation  
Steven L. Gatzke, Director for Facilities and Maintenance  
Marie F. Gee, Director for Personnel  
Michael K. Rudder, Director of School Improvement and Grants  
Wyllys D. VanDerwerker, Director for Exceptional Learners  
Wendie L. Sullivan, Clerk/Recording Secretary

**MEDIA  
PRESENT:**

Katrina Dix, *The News & Advance*

**Agenda  
Items:**

- A-1. Notice of Closed Meeting
- A-2. Certification of Closed Meeting
- B-1. Personnel Report
- C-1. Public Comments
- D-1. Finance Report
- E. Consent Agenda
- F-1. Student Representative Comments
- G-1. Lynchburg City Schools Intersession Update
- H-1. Middle School Program of Studies: 2016-17
- H-2. Capital Improvement Plan: Heritage High School
- H-3. VSBA School Board Training
- I. Superintendent's Comments
- J. Board Comments
- K. Informational Items
- L. Adjournment

The Lynchburg City School Board met for its regular meeting at 4:47 p.m. in the Board Room at the School Administration Building. Ms. Hoss opened the meeting.

**A-1. Notice of Closed Meeting**

Upon MOTION by Dr. Coleman, SECONDED by Ms. Waller, the school board convened a closed meeting at 4:47 p.m. pursuant to the Code of Virginia §2.2-3711 (A) (1) (7) to discuss a specific personnel matter and to receive a legal briefing from counsel.

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Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

**A-2. Certification of Closed Meeting**

Upon MOTION by Ms. Carter, SECONDED by Dr. Nilles, the school board reconvened in open session at 5:57 p.m.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

Upon MOTION by Ms. Carter, SECONDED by Dr. Coleman, the school board approved by roll call vote the following Certification of Closed Meeting:

The Lynchburg City School Board certifies that, in the closed meeting just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matters specifically identified in the motion to convene in a closed meeting and lawfully permitted to be so discussed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

Ms. Hoss asked those in attendance to rise and recite *The Pledge of Allegiance*.

Upon MOTION by Dr. Coleman, SECONDED by Mrs. Snyder, the school board added item B-1. Personnel Report and re-alphabetized agenda item headings accordingly.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

**B-1. Personnel Report**

Upon MOTION by Dr. Nilles, SECONDED by Ms. Poore, the school board approved the personnel report for the period February 2 – March 15, 2016.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

Ms. Hoss read the following statement:

“Mr. Tyree has tendered and the school division has accepted his resignation, effective June 30, 2016. Mr. Tyree will not return to the classroom but will pursue other teaching opportunities with the support of the school administration. The board appreciates Mr. Tyree's contributions to the division over his 10 year tenure, however, the parties mutually agree that this resolution is in the best interest of all concerned.”

Dr. Brabrand read the following statement:

“Dear LCS Students, Parents, and Members of the Lynchburg Community,

“I want to address the public about the recent incident at an assembly at Dunbar Middle School on Friday, February 26. This program has created a lot of discussion and comment, some of which has been based on faulty information. I would like to take this opportunity to try to set the record straight as much as I can within the constraints of privacy laws.

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“The assembly that was held at Dunbar was part of the schools’ celebration of Black History Month. It featured Keith Lee’s dancers; Colonel Graham, a Dunbar employee who spoke about his life experiences; and a performance of gospel songs by the LU Praise Group. This was in all respects a celebration of African-American culture and progress without any other motivations or agendas.

During the assembly, an employee interrupted the program by going to the microphone on the stage during the singing performance to express his offense with the portion of the program. He then offered the students an opportunity to leave the auditorium with him. This incident upset and confused a great many people. Many have expressed concern that the interruption was racially motivated, while others felt the employee’s actions were due to his objection to the religious aspect of the assembly. This is a passionate debate that is continuing to take place and has received widespread attention in the traditional media and on social media.

“The Lynchburg City Schools administration investigated this incident immediately and, while privacy laws prohibit school officials from commenting on specific personnel matters, in light of the concerns expressed and the fact that much of this is already in the public domain, I do feel some comment is appropriate. Based on the investigation, I am confident that the employee’s actions were not racially motivated, but were related to his concerns about the religious content of the Assembly. However, that is not to deny or minimize the way those in attendance felt about or perceived the interruption, or to express approval for the way in which it occurred. Moreover, this incident has highlighted a long-standing concern around racial sensitivity and our need to be more tolerant, understanding, and inclusive of all people, that must not be ignored.

“In addition to the racial concerns raised by the incident, there are religious ones. As part of our investigation, we consulted an attorney with expertise in education and Constitutional law regarding the religious content of the Assembly in light of our Constitutional obligation to remain neutral on matters of religion. We were advised that the inclusion of some gospel music as a minor component of a secular program did not violate that obligation, because in the context it was presented to reflect the importance of that musical genre to the African-American community as it struggled for equal rights, and such use had a secular and educational purpose in the context of a larger program that was not intended to advance any religious agenda. In spite of the legality of the overall program, however, it’s clear that even the very limited religious content sparked strong feelings both in favor of and against the manner in which the religious content was presented, and as a result we feel it’s important to review and to clarify the manner in which religious content may be, both appropriately and sensitively, incorporated into the curriculum and in a manner that both respects our Constitutional obligations and the feelings and beliefs of a community that has a wide diversity of views about matters of religion.

“This event has raised a lot of strong emotions and frustration, and to help our community move forward, we are scheduling a listening tour at different city locations over the next month – March 21 from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, April 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Jubilee Center, and April 12 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Miller Center – to gain better understanding of all of the concerns expressed as a result of the incident and any other concerns citizens in our community may have about our schools. For those who cannot attend, we have set up the website [lcsedu.net](http://lcsedu.net) for you to share with us your comments and concerns as well.

“I know that we need to do more than listen, if we are going to move forward from this incident. Therefore, I’m recommending to the school board that the input we receive from these listening tours be shared with our LCS Equity Task Force, which can provide recommendations to it around school system policies, procedures, and protocols, as well as training. The Equity Task Force was created by the school board to enhance the communication between the school board and the community around such issues of equity and fairness.

“Our goal in this entire process must be to ensure that we uphold our core values in Integrity, Respect, Teamwork, and Learning, as well as provide the racial and religious understanding, sensitivity, and inclusiveness, consistent with our values, as a public school system and our mission of Every Child, By Name and by Need, to Graduation. Through responding in a positive and respectful way to adversity, we can emerge stronger as we confront our challenges, listen to our community, and commit to grow as an educational system.

“I hope to see you at the forums. I am confident that, by working together, we can create the solutions necessary to move our system forward. Thank you for your support now and into the future as we work together for the betterment of our students.”

(SEE SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2016, EXHIBIT “A,” FOR A COPY OF THE PERSONNEL REPORT.)

**C-1. Public Comments**

In accordance with Policy BDDH Public Participation at School Board Meetings, the school board welcomes requests and comments as established in the guidelines within that policy. Individuals who wish to speak before the school board shall have an opportunity to do so at this time.

Kate Staton, Martha Johnson, and Delaney Taylor spoke about the event that occurred at Paul Laurence Dunbar Middle School for Innovation on February 26, 2016.

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**D-1. Finance Report**

The school administration, in accordance with the FY2015-16 school operating budget, authorized, approved, and processed the necessary payments through February 29, 2016. The school administration certifies that the amounts approved are within budgetary limits and revenue.

The operating fund expenditure report summarizes the payments made through February 29, 2016, for the operating fund.

Total Operating Fund Budget	\$ 90,820,024.00
Prior Year End Encumbrances	\$ 90,304.40
Insurance Proceeds	\$ 54,180.84
School Bus Funding	\$ 977,000.00
Fund Balance Return	\$ 2,316,449.00
Restricted Donations	\$ <u>1,105.00</u>
Adjusted Budget	\$ 94,259,063.24

Through February 29, 2016

Actual Revenue Received	\$ 53,658,057.29
Actual Expenditures	\$ 54,767,590.15
Actual Encumbered	\$ 31,726,075.19

Percent of Budget Received	56.93%
Percent of Budget Used, excluding encumbrances	58.10%

As of 2/29/16 – 8 months	66.67%
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The revenue and expenditure reports detail the transactions recorded through February 29, 2016. All reports appear as attachments to the agenda report.

Mr. Beckles noted that the Virginia Department of Education recently made changes to its computer software which caused school division accounted to be credited with incorrect amounts of funding. The school board should see corrections to those errors in the next finance report.

As a result of recent negotiations associated with the governor's budget, the school division lost \$240,000 in proposed funding for next year. The school administration will need to review Tier I budget requests and recommend to the school board cuts to those requests.

The school administration will present the proposed 2016-17 school operating budget to the Lynchburg City Council on March 22, 2016, at 4:00 p.m. School board members were encouraged to attend.

(SEE SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2016, EXHIBIT "B," FOR A COPY OF THE FINANCE REPORT.)

**E. Consent Agenda**

Upon MOTION by Dr. Dolan-Sewell, SECONDED by Dr. Coleman, the school board approved the school board meeting minutes of March 1, 2016 (Public Budget Hearing), and March 1, 2016 (Regular Meeting), the E. C. Glass High School International Travel, the Request for Reallocation of Budget, and the Capital Improvement Plan: Fort Hill Community School.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Mr. Polley, Ms. Poore, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

(SEE SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2016, EXHIBIT "C," FOR A COPY OF THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS.)

**F. Student Representative Comments**

Mr. Stephen M. Farmer, student representative for E. C. Glass High School, and Mr. Javon T. Calloway, student representative pro tem for Heritage High School, shared comments about the events and activities occurring at their schools.

**G-1. Lynchburg City Schools Intersession Update**

Lynchburg City Schools was awarded \$368,318 for a Start – Up Grant for an Extended School Year. The grant, Extending Opportunities for Success, supports six days of instruction during intersession outlined in 2015-2016 calendar. This

presentation provided the school board with a summary of the February 2016 Intersession, compared participation data from the October 2015 Intersession, and a look ahead to Intersession days during the 2016-2017 school year. School board members asked for data associated with the number of students invited by school and if any thought had been given to making schedules for schools more consistent. At this time, schools have been responsible for deciding the daily schedule. The school administration will gather the requested data and provide that information to the school board.

#### **H-1. Middle School Program of Studies**

The school board annually reviews and approves the Middle School Program of Studies for the next school year. The updated version for 2016-2017 was introduced, with the following key changes recommended:

- Updated introductory explanation of middle school and course selection
- Organization of the course by grade level
- Description of math pathways
- Course placement criteria
- Intent to provide Latin and Algebra 2 at MS if possible
- Retention policy
- Expunging policy
- Upcoming updates to gifted services

Dr. McClain explained that the format of the new Middle School Program of Studies would be easier for new middle school parents to use. The courses are organized by grade level, and there is a full description of math pathways. The program of studies is in alignment with the High School Program of Studies updates and the pathway and criteria for accessing advanced classes is clearly denoted. Further, the new policy regarding the calculation of high school GPAs and middle school retention policy updates are included in the document. Updates to the retention policy include

- an intervention plan at the end of each quarter of a failing grade;
- afterschool sports/activities require student to follow the intervention plan (if the student has a failing grade);
- that summer school is required if the student fails a course;
- that the summer school passing grade requires a proficiency assessment in English and math;
- a summer school project if the student passed the SOL test but not the course;
- that if there is one failed course after the summer, the student will be promoted but retake the failed course (likely after school);
- and
- that if there are two or more failed courses after summer school, the student will repeat the grade or move to an alternative school.

Students will have access to advanced courses through three options: achievement scores; teacher recommendation; and parent request.

Expunging grades for high school credit courses will automatically be done if the student fails the course. If the course is passed, the parent/student may opt to expunge the course grade and credit by the end of the year if the grade does not meet the standards of the parent/student. Additional high school credit courses that the school division will offer at the middle school level are Algebra 2 and Latin. In addition, some gifted exploratories/rotations as well as gifted instructional approaches will be implemented to enhance gifted opportunities.

School board members had questions about what a program would look like if a student was moved from a full-day program to an alternative education program. There were also questions about how the many changes to the middle school program were being presented to students and parents.

Upon MOTION by Dr. Nilles, SECONDED by Dr. Dolan-Sewell, the school board deferred action on the Middle School Program of Students for 2016-17 to April 19, 2016.

Yes Votes: Ms. Hoss, Ms. Waller, Ms. Carter, Dr. Coleman, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Nilles, Ms. Poore, Mr. Polley, Mrs. Snyder

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

(SEE SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 15, 2016, EXHIBIT "D," FOR A COPY OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES FOR 2016-17.)

#### **H-2. Capital Improvement Plan: Heritage High School**

The Heritage High School project includes funds set aside for hiring a professional moving company to relocate the contents of the existing Heritage High School building to the newly built Heritage High School. The City of Lynchburg Office of Procurement and Purchasing has received bids on the project.

A listing of all bids received are listed below. The school administration recommends the highlighted bid.

BIDDER	Richmond Commercial Services, Inc.	Southwest Virginia Moving	Lawrence Transportation Systems, Inc.	Blue Ridge Logistics, LLC	Moody Moving & Storage, Inc.
BASE BID	\$54,985	\$62,938	\$91,573	\$118,200	\$149,000

This item will be considered as a consent agenda item during the next school board meeting.

**H-3. VSBA School Board Training**

On March 3, 2016, the Lynchburg City School Board and the superintendent participated in training which focused on the roles and responsibilities of the school board and the superintendent. Members of the school board worked to develop governance norms and protocols for school board meetings, interaction during those meetings, and interaction with members of the Lynchburg City Schools’ community during that training session. There are several other areas for which norms and protocols need to be developed. The school board will convene a work session to complete that task. The school board clerk will poll the school board to identify a date for the work session.

**I. Superintendent’s Comments**

Dr. Brabrand announced that the Breakfast with the Superintendent, sponsored by the Lynchburg City Schools Education Foundation, Inc., occurred on March 10, 2016, with a record number of attendees. Mr. Copeland did an outstanding job as keynote speaker for the event.

The quarterly School Summit will occur on March 24, 2016, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Information Technology Center.

Online registration for students will begin on April 4, 2016.

Spring break will occur March 28-April 1, 2016.

Sandusky Middle School teacher Mike Bremer received a 911 Dispatch Community Hero award for his actions in September 2015. During the school day, Mr. Bremer, along with the school nurse, Mary Spencer, and other school staff responded heroically when a student suffered from a cardiac episode. Mr. Bremer and Ms. Spencer performed CPR and used the AED until EMS arrived on the scene to take over. The student is now on the road to recovery. Also T. C. Miller school counselor Courtney Hudson received the Education Community Hero award. These awards were recognized during the annual breakfast hosted by the American Red Cross.

**J. Board Comments**

Dr. Coleman noted Mr. Copeland’s superior job letting everyone know what is going on at Heritage High School during his presentation at the LCS Education Foundation breakfast.

**K. Informational Items**

Next School Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 5, 2016, 5:30 p.m., Board Room, School Administration Building

**L. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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 Mary Ann Hoss, Chairman

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 Wendie L. Sullivan, Clerk

(SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILES ARE LOCATED IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR FINANCE AT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.)