

Special Called Board Meeting Highlights  
March 23, 2020  
Coronavirus School Shutdown

The Gates County Board of Education met in a special called session on Monday, March 23, 2020, at the Gates County Board of Education Central Office. Chairman Ray Felton called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The following board members were present: Mr. Ray Felton, Mrs. Glendale Boone, Mr. Leslie Byrum and Mrs. Sallie Ryan. Mrs. Claire Whitehurst was absent due to illness.

There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Felton informed that this special meeting was called to (1) Amend Policy 2302 – Remote Participation in Board Meetings – by adding Section A.5 as follows: “In the event of a declared State of Emergency and/or when public health or safety may be affected by the presence of board members in the same meeting room, the Board may meet electronically pursuant to this Policy”, and (2) to approve Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent. Mrs. Boone made a motion to approve the amendment to Policy 2302 and to approve the Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent. Mr. Byrum seconded the motion, and the board members unanimously approved.

Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent, provided information that he has gathered during his conference calls, with officials in Raleigh, regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic and school closure. Schools across the state have been closed since March 16, 2020, and it is expected to be longer. Main areas of concern are providing meals to the students, continuing to provide instruction for our students, and providing child care to meet family needs, especially for health care workers, so they are able to continue in their jobs. Dr. Williams noted that we were one of the first school districts in this area to begin providing meals and instruction for our students. Our daycare has remained open. Everyone has worked as a team, and they are to be commended for their dedication.

Areas of concern going forth, if schools continue to be closed by order of Governor Roy Cooper:

- Providing meals for an extended time
- Possibly offering child care for families
- The cost and source of funding for these added services
- Providing remote learning opportunities without county-wide internet access, and an adequate number of chrome books
- We do not have a service agreement in place for the chrome books that we do have, in case of damage
- Keeping employees employed, especially the classified staff
- Plan needed for next school year to compensate for the instruction time lost
- Need a flexible school calendar
- Parental instruction cannot take the place of face-to-face instruction provided by teachers
- Immunization requirements for kindergarten students for 2020-2021 school year
- Seniors need to have a graduation ceremony

Mr. Ray Felton asked Mrs. Tammy Boone, Assistant Superintendent, to compile a list of concerns and forward this to Mark Johnson, State Superintendent at the Department of Public Instruction and other officials in Raleigh.

There was discussion regarding the closing of the community center. Ms. Lulu Eure, Community Center Director, was asked to come and speak. Ms. Eure stated that all gatherings have been cancelled. The only foot traffic, at the center, involves distribution of meals for our senior citizens and some patrons that are using the fitness room for physical therapy needs. There is constant cleaning done by the staff. There are never more than 10 people in the center at one time. The board required the building be closed except for these specialized exceptions, and these are to be limited to appointments only, during certain hours of the day. Mr. Ray Felton stated to Ms. Eure, that when Dr. Williams or Mrs. Boone gives a directive/order, she must comply. After she complies, she may bring her concerns to the board, if necessary.

Ms. Eure also stated she has concerns over the playground, since there has been quite a lot of activity there with the closing of schools. She, however, does not have a way to close this area, since it is not fenced in. She also noted that the soccer season has been cancelled. Parents that have paid will be offered the choice of getting a refund or letting the money paid go towards fall soccer. Parents will be asked to sign forms regarding their choice. Ms. Eure was also questioned about the number of employees working at the center. She noted that there are some maintenance requirements that she can assign to the employees. The governor has asked employers to try their best to keep employees employed, even if it is not in their normal job description.

Mrs. Sallie Ryan questioned if the Exceptional Children's Department can meet all the requirements mandated by the State. Mrs. Boone noted that Mrs. Chante' Jordan, Exceptional Children's Director, has met with the EC teachers, and they have a plan in place.

Dr. Williams stated that Governor Cooper will be doing a Live Stream at 1:00 p.m. today, and with the new information, we may need to adjust our plans going forth.

Mrs. Glendale Boone made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Sallie Ryan seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Chairman Felton adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

*Attachment: Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent*

## **Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent**

**Whereas** on March 14, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency and the closure of all North Carolina public schools for instructional purposes through March 30, 2020, as a safeguard against the further spread of COVID-19; and

**Whereas** under G.S. § 115C-36, the local Board of Education has general control and supervision of all matters pertaining to the public schools; and

**Whereas** under G.S. § 115C-47(15) the local Board of Education has the authority to prescribe the duties of the Superintendent, subject to G.S. § 115C-276(a); and

**Whereas** the Board of Education finds that the current state of emergency requires that the Superintendent be granted greater flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately to the evolving crisis; and

**Whereas** under Board Policy 2450, the operation of any section or sections of Board policies not established by law or contract may be suspended temporarily by a majority vote of Board members present at a Board meeting held in compliance with law and Board policy;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Gates County Board of Education grants to the Superintendent the following temporary powers to address the COVID-19 emergency:

1. Authority to temporarily waive such Board policies or provisions of Board policies as the Superintendent shall deem necessary to comply with guidance from appropriate health or governmental authorities or necessary for other effective response.
2. Authority to take any lawful actions necessary to ensure the continuation of public education, to provide for the health and safety of students and employees, or to respond to direction from appropriate health and government authorities. Such actions may include, but are not limited to: adjustments to the curriculum and the provision of alternative educational program options; adjustments to employee work schedules and assignments; modifications to the school calendar; adjustments to the delivery of school-provided meals; limitations on access to property owned or controlled by the Board of Education; applying to any governmental body for financial or other aid as may be available; and applying to any governmental body for waiver of regulations or requirements, compliance with which is affected by the COVID-19 emergency.
3. Authority to enter into contracts without board approval for any dollar amount necessary for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, or services for sanitation, cleaning, technology, or other needs directly related to the COVID-19


emergency situation, provided such action is consistent with all applicable State and Federal laws.

**NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Superintendent is directed to keep the Board of Education informed of any actions taken under this emergency authority as soon as is practicable in light of the circumstances.

**NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the temporary powers authorized by this Resolution are in effect for the duration identified in Governor's Order of March 14, 2020, and any subsequent extension of that order, unless otherwise rescinded or extended by the Board upon a two-thirds majority vote.

**NOW, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that execution of this Resolution is conclusive evidence of the Board's approval of this action and of the authority granted herein.

Adopted and approved this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2020.

  
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Chair, on behalf of

3/23/20  
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Date

The Gates County Board of Education