



Blount County Government

359 Court Street
Maryville, TN 37804-5906

Meeting Minutes - Final

Education Committee

Commissioner Mike Akard
Commissioner Robbie Bennett
Commissioner Brad Bowers
Commissioner Misty Davis
Commissioner John Giles
Commissioner Jessica Hannah
Commissioner Earl McMahan
Commissioner Steve Mikels
Commissioner Dawn Reagan
Ex Officio School Members: Erica Moore

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

12:30 PM

Prospect Elementary School
1535 Burnett Station Rd., Seymour 37865

ROLL CALL

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Blount County Education Committee met at Prospect Elementary School in Seymour, Tennessee, on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. Blount County Education Committee Chair Dawn Reagan called the meeting to order. There were 7 members present and 4 absent. The Chair declared that a quorum did exist. In addition to the Education Committee members, others present were: Director of Schools David Murrell; Assistant Director Jake Jones; Chief Financial Officer Kristi Yates; Supervisor of Facilities, Maintenance and Capital Projects James Duke; School Nutrition Coordinator Karen Helton; School Nutrition Bookkeeper Idamae Wooten; District Communications Elementary Instruction Amanda Vance; and School Board Members: John Lowe and Chris Pass. The following proceedings were held, to wit:

- Present** 7 - Commissioner Mike Akard, Commissioner Robbie Bennett, Commissioner Misty Davis, Commissioner John Giles, Commissioner Earl McMahan, Commissioner Dawn Reagan, and School Representative Erica Moore
- Absent** 4 - Commissioner Brad Bowers, Commissioner Jessica Hannah, Commissioner Steve Mikels, and School Representative Fred Goins

A. SETTING OF AGENDA.

A motion was made by Commissioner Akard, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, that the agenda be set. A voice vote was taken with all voting aye, and none were opposed. The Chair declared the motion to have passed.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

1. [Education Committee Meeting Minutes for October 1, 2024.](#)

Attachments: [Minutes of Education Comm Meeting 2024-Oct-01](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner McMahan, that the minutes be approved. A voice vote was taken with all voting aye, and none were opposed. The Chair declared the motion to have passed.

C. PUBLIC INPUT ON ITEMS ON AGENDA.

There was none.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.**E. NEW BUSINESS.****1. School District Reports.**

Director of Blount County Schools David Murrell thanked the attendees for their presence at Prospect Elementary School. He spoke highly of the school, their leadership, and introduced the school's Principal Heather Byrd. Dr. Byrd boasted about the facility, staff, students and community. She introduced a couple of third grade ambassadors, Gunner and Avery, who talked about their personal experiences at Prospect Elementary. Fifth grade teacher, Ms. Niethammer, was introduced and she spoke of her teaching experience at Prospect Elementary. Dr. Byrd and Ms. Niethammer mentioned different programs at the school, like WIN time (What I Need), and the support from the school board and commission.

Mr. Murrell mentioned celebrating the Level 5 schools, which is a growth indicator with 5 being the highest score; and the Reward schools, a designation by the state for growth and achievement. Those reward schools being Carpenters Elementary, Heritage High, Porter Elementary, and Samuel Everett.

Mr. Murrell introduced School Nutrition staff members Karen Helton and Idamae Wooten. Nutrition Services coordinates cafeteria staff and resources for all twenty-one schools in the Blount County School district. They oversee the planning, ordering, preparation and distribution of daily meals. Ms. Helton spoke about the school nutrition program being integral in providing students with the best nutritional foundation for learning. The program is funded by reimbursements from the USDA and school cafeteria sales. In 2023-24, the school district served a total of 849,000 lunches and 446,000 breakfasts. 52% of the school district receives free or reduced meals. The program not only follows strict USDA guidelines, but also federal, state and local regulations. School cafeteria equipment (e.g. ovens, dishwashers, etc.) is procured utilizing nutrition program funds, not tax dollars. Over the years, school nutrition has experienced a lot of mandated changes, even before COVID, and Karen and her staff are tasked with communicating and implementing the changes to remain in-compliance. Nutrition is very important for successful learning and through donations, food is also supplied to students for the weekends, extended breaks, even dinners.

Mr. Murrell mentioned a capital project for LED lighting at Heritage Middle. Supervisor of Facilities, Maintenance and Capital Projects James Duke briefly spoke about the district wide energy savings program that will increase lighting while reducing energy consumption.

There was no action taken.

2. Blount County School Board.

There was nothing to report.

3. Proposed 2025 Education Committee Meeting Schedule at 12:30 PM on Feb-04, Mar-04, Apr-01, Apr-29, Sep-02, Sep-30, Nov-04, and Dec-02 location to be announced.

BCS Assistant Director Jake Jones offered to coordinate the location of the next Education Committee meeting, which is on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. The location will be communicated to the members through the County Commission office.

There was no action taken.

F. PUBLIC INPUT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

There was none.

G. ADJOURNMENT.

A motion was made by Commissioner McMahan, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, that the meeting be adjourned. The Chair declared the meeting be to adjourned. The Education Committee adjourned on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 1:20 p.m.