



Blount County Government

359 Court Street
Maryville, TN 37804-5906

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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: John Lowe and Randi Howard

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

12:30 PM

Walland Elementary School
247 East Miller's Cove Rd. 37886

ROLL CALL

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Blount County Education Committee met at Walland Elementary School in Walland, Tennessee, on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. Blount County Clerk Gaye Hasty called the meeting to order. There were 5 members present, with the late arrival of Robbie Bennett, and 4 were absent. The Clerk declared that a quorum did exist. In addition to the Education Committee members, others present were: Walland Elementary School Principal Jennifer Tipton; BCS Chief Finance Officer Brittany Spence; BCS Chief of Staff & Operations Courtney Whitehead; BCS Chief of Elementary Instruction April Heron; BCS Chief of Secondary Instruction Jon Young; and BCS Chief of Curriculum & Professional Development Dr. Heather Byrd; and BC School Board member Chris Pass. The following proceedings were held, to wit:

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

ELECTION OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The Clerk opened the floor for nominations of a Education Committee Chairperson.

Commissioner Bennett nominated Dawn Reagan. That was seconded by Commissioner Davis. The Clerk asked if there were any further nominations. There were none. A motion was made by Commissioner McMahan that nominations cease. The Clerk asked if there was any objection to nominations being ceased. There being no objection, the Clerk declared the floor closed for nominations.

A voice vote was taken on the nomination with all voting aye, and none opposed. The Clerk declared Dawn Reagan elected as Chair of the Education Committee.

ELECTION OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR

The Clerk opened the floor for nominations of a Education Committee Vice Chair.

Commissioner Bennett nominated Earl McMahan. That was seconded by Commissioner Davis. The Clerk asked if there were any further nominations. There were none. A motion was made by Commissioner Reagan that nominations cease. The Clerk asked if there was any objection to nominations being ceased. There being no objection, the Clerk declared the floor closed for nominations.

A voice vote was taken on the nomination with all voting aye, and none opposed. The Clerk declared Earl McMahan elected as Vice Chair of the Education Committee.

A. SETTING OF AGENDA.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

1. [Education Committee Meeting Minutes for September 2, 2025.](#)

Attachments: [Education Committee Sept 2, 2025 Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Giles, seconded by Commissioner Davis, 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. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

F. NEW BUSINESS.

1. Report from Principal.

Principal Jennifer Tipton of Walland Elementary School was recognized. She highlighted the contributions of Instructional Coach, Paula King, and the implementation of the Instructional Practice Guide (IPG). The school's success rate increased to 33%, up from 24% the previous year. While they previously achieved a Level 5 in student growth, they maintained strong performance with a Level 4 in growth this year. Notably, the school saw a significant increase in overall achievement, with steady growth across all student groups, including English as a Second Language (ESL) students, students with disabilities, and those considered economically disadvantaged.

There was no action taken.

2. School District Reports.

The Chair recognized Director of Schools, Mr. Justin Ridge, who provided a list of capital improvements and other projects for the 2025-26 school year. He envisions the Education Committee's involvement in prioritizing future projects.

There was no action taken.

3. Blount County School Board.

The Chair recognized School Board Members Mr. John Lowe and Mr. Chris Pass. It was noted that Erica Moore resigned from the Education Committee. To fill the vacancy, Randi Howard was nominated by the School Board.

A voice vote was taken to appoint School Board Member Randi Howard as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Education Committee. The motion passed unanimously, with all voting aye and none opposed.

4. Walkabout.

Following adjournment, committee members toured the facility.

There was no action taken.

5. Next Meeting on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025 - Location to be Announced.

The committee recommended Union Grove Middle School for the next Education Committee meeting location. Mr. Ridge will confirm with the school and follow up with the Chair.

G. PUBLIC INPUT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

There was none.

H. ADJOURNMENT.

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Giles. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned. The Education Committee adjourned on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 1:48 p.m. Following adjournment, committee members participated in a tour (walkabout) of the school.