



Camden County Board of Education

Camden Library Meeting Room

May 8, 2025

The Camden County Board of Education met for their regular monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at the Camden County Library. Members in attendance were: Chairman Mr. Chris Purcell, Vice Chairman Ms. Magen O'Neal, Board Members Mr. Adam High and Mr. G. Wayne White. Board member Mr. Christian Overton joined by phone. Board Attorney, Mr. John Leidy and Clerk to the Board, Ms. Jacqueline Davenport, were also present.

Chairman Purcell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Purcell asked if there were any changes to be made to the closed session agenda. There were none. Mr. High made the motion to go into closed session. The motion was seconded by Ms. O'Neal. The Board went into closed session at 6:01 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 7:00 p.m.

Community members that signed the guest registry included: Lillian Johnston, Juan Castillo, Kelly Hoggard, Jody Powers, Mike Reaves, Frank Powers, Victoria Solak, Kelsey Gray, Statton Solak, Joshua Gray, Brayden Gray, April Turner, Sue Powers, Amber Davis, Charna Boyd, Jessi Simpson, Bounng Jim Kang, Jonah Simpson, Hannah Kang, James Simpson, Judith Simpson, Timothy T Lazar, Terry Pherblee, Brenda Pherblee, Gloria Gallop, Michelle Nobles, Lee Nobles, Morgan Nobles, Jackson Nobles, Sally Norfleet, Lisa Byrum and Crystal Richardson.

There were no changes to the open session agenda.

Mr. Bill Blake, pastor of Old Trap Methodist Church, provided the invocation.

Mr. Purcell led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no public comments.

Ms. O'Neal read the Board Spotlight for Grandy Primary School. She introduced James Simpson, a first grader at Grandy Primary, who has grown a lot this year. He started the year needing help and reminders, especially when it was hard for him to hear, but now he works on

his own with confidence and speaks up when he needs help. James is kind, respectful, always ready to learn, and is a great friend who tries his best, both in class and on the sports field.

Mr. Purcell provided the remainder of the Board Spotlights, beginning with Cade Boyd for Camden Intermediate School. Cade is a respectful, kind, and responsible student who always helps others and makes thoughtful decisions. He overcomes challenges with a positive attitude and shows great dedication in both his academics and school activities, like helping his team place fourth out of ten teams in the CIS Battle of the Books. Cade is a natural leader, a reliable friend, and an outstanding role model for everyone at school.

Hannah Kang was introduced as the Student of the Month for Camden Middle. Hannah exemplifies the characteristics of CUBS expectations. This month she was honored for her winning contribution to the Camden Women's Club Literature Contest. Not only did Hannah win the local chapter's contest, but she was the only middle school student in the state to win in the short story contest for 2025.

Annalise Barlow and Trent Powers received recognition for dual Student of the Month for Camden County High School. Under the guidance of their teacher Mr. Wesley Young, both students recently submitted entries into a national history contest with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs entitled *National History Day Silent Heroes: Untold Stories of the Korean War*. Both students will have their work featured nationally.

Also recognized for Camden County High School was Statton Solak, Franklin Frisbie, Brayden Gray and Kamryn Rowe. Under the guidance of their teacher Mr. Wesley Young, the students participated in the White Rose Student Research Contest. Camden County High School was only one of four high schools that participated in this year's contest. Students were responsible for submitting research and reflections on non-military action or policy taken by the United States government or American citizens to address the persecution of European Jews between 1933 and 1945. Each student received state wide recognition for either placing or being a finalist in this year's competition.

Emma Nobles was recognized as the Student of the Month for Camden Early College. Emma embodies the values of CECHS, making her a standout student both in actions and character. She is always ready to help others, from volunteering at schools, to assisting with yard work. She never seeks attention for her service, but her actions speak volumes. Emma's involvement in Honor Society further highlights her commitment to giving back. Her heart for service and kindness makes her a true standout in the community.

The final recognition of the evening was for Denise Williams. Ms. Williams is both an instructional assistant and a bus driver with Camden County Schools. The transportation department recently held a Bus Rodeo in which drivers were faced with a series of skill-based obstacles designed to test their precision, safety awareness, and overall experience in school bus operations. Ms. Williams was recognized as the top driver in the competition and will now represent Camden County Schools at the Northeast North Carolina District Bus Rodeo. The

Board, along with the transportation department, extended their congratulations and appreciation for her service to the students and community.

Mr. High made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. O'Neal seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously. The following consent items were approved:

- A.** Approval of Minutes
(Regular Open Session Minutes – April 10, 2025 and April 16, 2025)

- B.** Budget Amendments
(Ms. Sally Norfleet, Chief Finance Officer, has provided budget amendments for approval.)
 - ❖ *State Funds*

- C.** Field Trip Request - CCHS
(Ms. Brittany Palmer, Health Science teacher at Camden County High School, has requested an overnight field trip to Nashville, Tennessee from June 17 to June 22, 2025 for two students to attend a HOSA event and symposium.)

- D.** Field Trip Request - CCHS
(Commander Dupree, JROTC instructor, has requested an overnight field trip to the United States Coast Guard Base in Elizabeth City, NC June 1-4, 2025 for a Summer Leadership Experience for twenty-five students.)

The following budget amendment was approved:

Budget Amendment

Camden County Schools Administrative Unit

State Public School Fund

The Camden County Board of Education at a meeting on the 8th day of May, 2025 passed the following resolution.

Be it resolved that the following amendments be made to the Budget Resolution for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.

Code Number	Description of Code	Amount	
		Increase	Decrease
5100	Regular Instructional Services	330.00	
6500	Operational Support Services	3,828.95	
Explanation:			
	Total Appropriation in Current Budget		\$ 21,010,249.27
	Amount of Increase/Decrease of		
	Above Amendment	+	4,158.95
	Total Appropriation in Current Amended		
	Budget		\$ 21,014,408.22

Passed by majority vote of the Board of Education of Camden County on the 8 th day of May, 2025. _____ Chairman, Board of Education _____ Secretary, Board of Education	We the Board of County Commissioners of Camden County hereby approve the changes in the County School Funds Budget as indicated above, and have made entry of these changes on the minutes of said Board, this ____ day of _____ 20 ____. _____ Chairman, Board of County Commissioners _____ Clerk, Board of County Commissioners
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BUDGET AMENDMENT
May 8, 2025

1. State Public School Fund

A. We have received an allotment revision and must increase our budget to reflect the allotment. We request your approval of the following amendment.

Non-Instructional Support

1.5110.003.163 Substitute Pay	\$	+	307.00
1.5110.003.211 Emp. Soc. Sec. Costs		+	23.00
Total – Non-Instructional Support	\$	+	330.00

B. We have reviewed this area of the budget and find that we must increase our budget to cover the benefits that will be covered at the end of the year by NCDPI that are paid during the year to employees. We request your approval of the following amendment.

Non-Contributory Employee Benefits

1.6550.009.184 Longevity Pay	\$	+	
2,507.35			
1.6550.009.211 Emp. Soc. Sec. Costs		+	191.83
1.6550.009.221 Emp. Retirement Costs		+	602.77
Total – Non-Contributory Employee Benefits	\$	+	
3,301.95			

C. We have received an allotment revision and must increase our budget to reflect the allotment. We request your approval of the following amendment.

Transportation of Pupils

1.6550.056.147 Salary – Bus Monitors	\$	+	527.00
Total – Transportation of Pupils	\$	+	527.00

3100.000 Revenue – State Public School Fund	\$	-	
4,158.95			

BUDGET AMENDMENT
State Public School Fund
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**Passed by majority vote of the Board of
Education of Camden County on the 8th
day of May, 2025.**

Chairman, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Mr. Juan Castillo, principal of Camden Early College High School, provided the year-end update for Board members. This year the Early College has been marked by resilience, growth, and dedication from both staff and students. The staff began the year by refocusing on its mission and prioritizing student well-being. In working toward fulfilling this mission, expanded tutoring opportunities and new initiatives like "Disconnect to Connect" were launched by Ms. Djigounian and Ms. Bush, aimed at strengthening students' social and emotional health. Additionally, a student-led digital newspaper, "Bruin Union," spearheaded by junior Madison Wood, gave students a voice in school leadership.

Academically, the school celebrated remarkable success with 93% of students performing at grade level and 84% of juniors scoring a composite of 19 or higher on the ACT. This growth placed the school in the top 1.5% of all public schools. Students have not only excelled in academics but they have also engaged in extracurricular activities like sports, theater, and community service. They participated in events such as homecoming, spirit week, and plays, and even raised money for the SPCA. The school also saw firsts, including a second-place finish at the North Carolina State Regional Math Contest and the introduction of a Commitment Day for incoming freshmen.

Mr. Castillo pointed out despite the year's highs, the school also had its hardships, including the loss of a former student. Yet, with resilience, the school community responded with incredible empathy. Students supported each other through grief, reminding everyone of the school's motto, "Once a Bruin, always a Bruin." Mr. Castillo was happy to report the year ended on a high note with prom and a joyful celebration of the seniors' accomplishments. Overall, this year was a testament to the strength and character of the Early College community, where students thrived academically, socially, and emotionally. Of the 31 students graduating this year, 27 will also earn

a degree or certificate from College of the Albemarle. Mr. Castillo concluded his presentation with a video of the year in pictures and reflections of students.

The remainder of the school updates were provided by Miss Emma Dupree. Highlights included:

Grandy Primary School (GPS)

- End of the year assessments are wrapping up for M Class and I-Ready
- 1st and 2nd graders will visit the Museum of the Albemarle
- Students published “books” and parents were invited to the book signings
- End of the year celebrations for each grade level will soon take place (Popsicle celebration, time capsule presentation, songs and certificates)

Camden Intermediate School (CIS)

- Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week Celebrations
- Final preparations for end-of-year testing
- PTO funded all student field trips
- Other year-end events such as class parties, award ceremonies, ice cream socials
- (Along with GPS) Students participated in Special Olympics; Field Day was a success thanks to the hard work of the PE teachers

Camden Middle School (CMS)

- EOG Spirit Week began with a spring sports pep rally
- Sports teams are wrapping up a strong season and preparing for conference tournaments
- 8th grade career fair that included local professionals and organizations
- Parents wrote letters to students for encouragement for EOG testing
- Excitement is building to finish the year strong

Camden County High School (CCHS)

- Spring Salute event showcased JROTC and honored Teachers of the Year. Special thanks for Mr. Wayne White being the guest speaker
- Prom featured a Vegas theme (“Lazar as Elvis”) in which the lobby and cafeteria were transformed
- Senior class photo and traditional school walk through scheduled for May 9th
- Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9; also honoring Nurse Hollingsworth
- Girls’ softball team is in the second round of state playoffs
- CCHS graduation is Friday, May 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Camden Early College High School (CECHS)

- Teacher made exams begin May 9th and EOC testing begins May 13
- Graduation practice is May 15th, followed by graduation on May 16th at COA

Miss Dupree ended her remarks by expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to speak and grow in public speaking as a student board representative. As this was her final report as a

student representative, she wished to thank staff, students, families and the school community for a great year. On behalf of the Board of Education, Chairman Purcell extended his appreciation of a job well done by Miss Dupree. With this being the first year that school graduations are occurring in May and neither student board member will be at the June meeting, the Board did not have the customary recognition of service plaque available for Miss Dupree. Chairman Purcell asked if Miss Dupree will be available for the June 12th meeting in order to provide the proper recognition ceremony for her years of service. She stated she would be and he thanked her again for her service.

Mr. Mike Reaves provided the Auxiliary and Student Services update. He informed the Board that our after school daycare program, just prior to the board meeting, completed an evaluation by the state in which they received a five-star rating. There is a lot of hard work that goes into such an accomplishment and he wanted to make sure the Board was aware of it.

Regarding the new high school construction project, Mr. Reaves shared during the joint meeting with the Camden County Commissioners on April 16th, the boards approved the Construction Guaranteed Maximum Price for \$80,974,120.00 to include athletic fields with turf, an auxiliary gym and an access road. A few final steps with the USDA must be met before final approval to move forward, but all of that is expected to be completed by the end of May. A question was asked if the final letter of authorization will be given at the end of the meeting that is scheduled for May 22nd with the USDA. While there was no definitive answer, Dr. Ratliff assured the Board members that he has spoken with the Heartland Construction representative and they currently have bulldozers on site and contracts with trade companies have already been signed. "We are close to seeing work begin."

Ms. Sally Norfleet provided the financial update. Current budget is \$29.5 million following the budget amendments provided for approval in the consent agenda. Ms. Norfleet is waiting on final approval for the 2025-2026 school year from the county commissioners. That information should be available in early June. In the meantime, her staff is working on closing out this year. Due to the state transferring over to a new system, Ms. Norfleet is also working on salary exceptions, but that work is expected to be completed by or before June 30th.

Ms. Amber Davis provided the Human Resources and Accountability update. With the end of the year fast approaching, celebrations for teacher of the year, employee of the year and retirees have been completed. This year's teachers of the year were: Wendy Wenthe (GPS), Alexa Williams (CIS and District Teacher of the Year), Taylor Racey (CMS), Cynthia Ramsey (CCHS) and Pam Djigounian (CEC). Employees of the year were: Marie Ivins (GPS), Laura Berry (CIS), Ashley Cornier (CMS), Jackie Duncan (CCHS), Amy Burnham (CEC), and Wendy Wheeler (Central Office and District Employee of the Year). Retirees were: Debbie Rachid (GPS and CIS), Heather Jones (CIS), Amie Aydlett, Cindy Drake, David Griffiths, Arealia Royle, Marianne Russell, Lori Worthington (all CMS), and Marvella McPherson (Central Office).

Ms. Kelly Hoggard provided the Board members with the Curriculum and Instruction update. She discussed three advisory boards that she has worked with throughout the year.

The Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Board included parents, teachers, central office staff, and other stakeholders focused on supporting AIG students. Their primary goal this year was to reestablish the board, gather input, and begin rewriting the district's AIG plan. Significant time was dedicated to revising the K–12 programming to better meet the needs of gifted learners.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Business Advisory Council was composed of business owners, educators, parents, and community members and worked to reconnect CTE programming with local workforce needs. The team partnered with MyFutureNC to assess regional employability trends and opportunities. They focused on aligning CTE pathways with local economic demands to better prepare students for careers in the Northeast region.

The last advisory board was the Exceptional Children's Advisory Board. The board was made up of parents, educators, and staff. The goal of the board was to build a foundation of norms, goals, and data-driven focus areas. They were able to recognize gaps in available state data and began identifying more relevant metrics to evaluate programming for students with special needs. The team also partnered with Albemarle Alliance, planned future parent engagement events, and prioritized transparent access to resources.

There were no questions from the Board.

Dr. Ratliff presented the proposed summer working hour schedule. Summer hours will begin the week of June 2nd and will end on August 1st. Eleven and twelve-month employees will have two options to choose from if approved. Mr. High made the motion to approve the Summer Work Hours as recommended by Dr. Ratliff. Mr. White seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hoggard presented calendar changes for the Early College High School for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years. In an effort to allow early college students the opportunity to take summer courses after their final semester, they must still be enrolled in a high school. As such, Ms. Hoggard requested the Board to approve the updated instructional calendars to reflect May 19, 2025 and May 19, 2026 as the last student day for Camden Early College High School as presented in the board packets. Dr. Ratliff recommended to the Board to approve the changes to the calendars as presented by Ms. Hoggard. Ms. O'Neal made the motion to approve the changes to the Camden Early College High School calendars as recommended by Dr. Ratliff and presented by Ms. Hoggard. Mr. High seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Reaves requested the Board approve an updated contract agreement with Raptor. The district will be implementing a new badge system to increase our ability to notify law enforcement and notify people in case of emergency as outlined in the board packet. Dr. Ratliff recommended that the Board approve the updated agreement with Raptor as presented by Mr. Reaves and included in the board packet. Mr. White made a motion to approve the new agreement with Raptor as recommended by Dr. Ratliff and presented by Mr. Reaves. Ms. O'Neal seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Ratliff recommended the Board approve the personnel changes as presented during the closed session. Mr. High made a motion to approve the superintendent's personnel recommendations as made during the closed session. Mr. White seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

The following personnel recommendations were approved:

**CAMDEN COUNTY SCHOOLS
PERSONNEL REPORT
May 8, 2025**

REASSIGNMENT	POSITION	SITE	EFFECTIVE DATE
Catherine Trotman	from Elementary Teacher to Instructional Technology Facilitator	at Grandy Primary School to Camden County Schools	July 1, 2025

RESIGNATIONS	POSITION	SITE	EFFECTIVE DATE
Kellie Berry	6th Grade Teacher	Camden Middle School	April 30, 2025
Serena DeSocio	Elementary Teacher	Camden Intermediate School	June 4, 2025
Martha Button	Instructional Assistant	Grandy Primary School	June 4, 2025
Matthew Sundberg	Social Studies Teacher	Camden County High School	July 31, 2025

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT	POSITION	SITE	EFFECTIVE DATE
Faith Richards	Daycare Assistant	Camden County Schools	July 7 - August 15, 2025

RETIREMENT	POSITION	SITE	EFFECTIVE DATE
Heather Jones	Elementary Teacher	Camden Intermediate School	July 1, 2025

Dr. Ratliff informed the Board that there is a comprehensive schedule of End of the Year Activities provided in their board packet. He also informed the public of a few of the events. The last day of school is May 19th for the early college and May 23rd for all traditional schools. Graduation for the early college will be May 16th and the traditional high school will be May 23rd.

There was no further business. Ms. O'Neal made the motion to close the open session meeting and return to closed session. Mr. High seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously. The Board recessed at 7:53 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 8:36 p.m.

Ms. O'Neal made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. White seconded the motion. Mr. Purcell called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 12th day of June, 2025.

Chairman of the Board

Board Secretary