

**Asheboro City Board of Education  
Winter Board Retreat  
Professional Development Center  
February 21, 2026**

**Board Members Attending:**

Gidget Kidd, Chair  
Ryan Patton  
Hailey Lee

Melissa Calloway, Vice Chair  
Baxter Hammer  
Adam Hurley

Dr. Brad Thomas  
Dr. Beth Knott  
Mikayla Cassidy

**Staff Attending:**

Dr. Aaron Woody  
Sandra Spivey Ayers  
Chandra Manning  
Melvin Diggs  
Michelle Harger  
Dubraska Stines

Anthony Woodyard  
Gayle Higgs  
Dr. Ana Floyd  
Dr. Christina Kinley  
Julie Brady

Dr. Wendy Rich  
Deanna Wiles  
Sarah Beth Cox  
Angel Etheridge  
Courtney McGowan

**Opening:**

Gidget Kidd, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:29 a.m., welcomed all in attendance and then turned the meeting over to Dr. Aaron Woody, Superintendent.

Dr. Woody stated we try to do things with excellence, heart, passion and detail at Asheboro City Schools and we want everyone to feel they belong here. He shared an overview of the retreat agenda.

Dr. Woody gifted the book *Theo of Golden* to the Board. This book's message is about the impact one person can make on an entire community through love, generosity, and a caring heart. Dr. Woody stated that young people are looking for something to hang on to and as educators, we are "hope dealers" for students. Our district's work should be rooted in the love of our students, staff, families, and community with measurable impact and public accountability.

**Strategic Plan Review**

Mr. Anthony Woodyard, Chief Information Officer, reviewed the responses to the Strategic Plan Survey and asked the question "Why do we do school (K-12 education)?" He asked the group to reflect and write down their thoughts. The group participated in an activity and discussion.

Mr. Woodyard noted schools are in an identity crisis because our priorities (strategic plan) differ from our daily practices. We want both those things to align. There were 167 responses to the Strategic Plan Survey and the top three responses to the question "What best describes your connection to Asheboro City Schools?" were family member of a current student, Asheboro City Schools staff member, and community member.

Mr. Woodyard asked the Board what they believe is most important in three areas: teaching and learning; the continuous improvement of Asheboro City Schools, and the collaborative culture of Asheboro City Schools, which involved a Board activity and group discussion.

**Global Innovation Center Highlight**

Dr. Rich shared how the Global Innovation Center connects to our Strategic Plan and reviewed highlights of the past three years including:

- Innovative retreats for district leaders and the Board 2020.
- Asheboro City Schools Strategic Plan vision 2021-2022.
- Ongoing efforts to seek new innovative grants. We currently have been awarded the following grants: NC Digital Learning Initiative, NC Stronger Connections, NC Business Committee for Education Paid IT Internships, SparkNC, and The Innovation Project.
- District leaders visit to the Apple campus in Cary in 2022.
- Formation of the Asheboro City Schools Innovation Leadership Team which consists of representation from all district departments and school leadership.
- Discussion of the many ways we are moving forward with innovation at Asheboro City Schools.
- Partnerships with many businesses and higher education organizations, including Toyota, Apple, The Innovation Project, FAME USA, Shift\_ed, Randolph Community College, UNCG, NC Zoo, NC DPI, Duke Energy, Trafera, and RTM.
- Process of renovating and developing the Global Innovation Center (Years 1-3).
- Information about the different labs at the Global Innovation Center, including SparkNC and Robotics labs, and discussed the different student opportunities and clubs offered now at the Global Innovation Center.
- Partnership with Toyota, including the grants awarded to Asheboro City Schools by Toyota.
- Donations made to Asheboro City Schools for the Global Innovation Center.
- Overview of events and meetings held at the Global Innovation Center.
- Professional development teachers received before teaching STEM enrichment clubs.

The Board toured the zSpace, Robotics, and Content Creation labs in the Global Innovation Center.

Ms. Spivey Ayers reviewed funding sources – braiding fund streams that were primarily state, federal, and partnership grants for the Global Innovation Center renovation.

### **Programming Review**

#### **Student SEL and Mental Health Update:**

Ms. Deanna Wiles, Director of Curriculum and Academic Program Support, and Ms. Michelle Harger, Director of Support Services, presented:

- Overview and updates on Blue Comet Quest, the district's Therapeutic Day Treatment program in partnership with Youth Haven Day Treatment, located at North Asheboro Middle School. Ms. Wiles shared program updates, including expanded support, rigorous instruction, targeted support, compliance, and monitoring.
- How Asheboro City Schools works to meet the social and emotional needs within the district, which include depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, inability to regulate emotions, substance abuse, trauma, and aggressive behavior.
- Ms. Harger shared that school-based therapy typically is weekly/biweekly depending on need and typically lasts for 45 minutes compared with daily, intensive therapy provided at Blue Comet Quest/Youth Haven.
- We have six full-time Kintegra therapists in the district, with an additional therapist beginning in March. These therapists provide wrap around support for our students throughout the school day.
- Student threat/risk monitoring process.

#### **Zoo School Program/Potential Growth**

Dr. Wendy Rich, Chief Academic Officer & Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Anthony Woodyard, Chief Information Officer, and Ms. Sandra Spivey Ayers, Chief Financial Officer, shared an overview of a vision for potential growth of programming at the Asheboro High School Zoo School.

#### **Advanced Teaching Roles**

Ms. Gayle Higgs, Chief Human Resource & Support Services Officer, presented the NC Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) model:

- State-funded, school-designed models provide highly effective teachers with higher compensation, leadership roles, and career pathways without leaving the classroom.
- ATR allows teachers to receive significant salary supplements and provides more professional development.
- High teacher support (92% agree ATR recognizes expertise).
- Rigorous selection and accountability for leadership roles.
- Best practices for adoption of the model.

Ms. Spivey Ayers noted the potential to reward our teachers while sustaining this in our current budget. We are hopeful the legislature will approve additional funding.

**Student Board Member Discussion**

Dr. Woody recommended tabling the discussion of adding student board members pending additional information and development of criteria for selecting students. There was a group discussion.

Ms. Higgs recommended tabling a student board member policy and removing it from policy committee meeting agendas going forward. We need to think through the logistics of a potential student advisory to the Board and make a recommendation at a later date.

**Closed Session**

Under NC General Statute 143-318.11.A1, to prevent disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States or not considered a public record within the Meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes, and upon motion by Adam Hurley and seconded by Dr. Brad Thomas, the Board unanimously agreed to enter closed session at 12:54 p.m. to discuss embargoed data and the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, and upon motion by Ryan Patton and seconded by Melissa Calloway, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

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Chairman

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Secretary