

## **Henderson County Board of Public Education**

### **MINUTES**

November 9, 2020

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a regular meeting on Monday, November 9, 2020, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the November 9, 2020 regular business meeting was held in accordance with approved, safety thresholds for public gatherings established by local health officials and Governor Roy Cooper. Capacity for the public/staff to attend was capped at no more than 25 persons. The Board received public comment via email prior to the meeting and the meeting was open to in-person public comment as well. The meeting was accessible to the public via a live stream link on the HCPS YouTube channel, <http://tiny.cc/HCPSlive>.

Board Members Present:	Blair Craven, Chairperson; Rick Wood, Vice Chairperson; Michael Absher, Mary Louise Corn, Jay Egolf and Amy Lynn Holt.
Board Members via Remote:	Dot Case
Administrative Staff Present:	Bo Caldwell, Ed.S. Superintendent; John Bryant, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services; Jan King, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer; Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer.
Attorney Present:	Mr. Chris Campbell
Board Clerk:	Mrs. Kathy R. Johnson

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

School Board Chairman, Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. and led all those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Craven stated that Ms. Dot Case would join the meeting virtually and all motion items would be approved via roll call votes.

#### **AGENDA APPROVAL**

Mr. Blair Craven acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rick Wood. Mr. Craven called for a roll call vote: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **RECOGNITIONS**

Board Chair, Mr. Blair Craven, read a resolution into the record recognizing Superintendent Bo Caldwell for his service to the Henderson County Public Schools. Mr. Caldwell is retiring on November 30, 2020 with more than 36 years of service to the Henderson County Public Schools. Dr. John Bryant shared congratulations and well-wishes for Mr. Caldwell in his retirement and presented him with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Education. Mr. Caldwell was involved with over 13 school construction/renovation projects during his tenure in the system. He thanked the Board of Education for allowing him to serve as the Superintendent for the past 4 years. Mr. Caldwell asked his wife Jackie to join him at the podium. He thanked his wife for being a great partner and his Leadership Team for their unending support. Mr. Caldwell stated it has been his honor and pleasure to serve in Henderson County for 36 years.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt and Dr. Jan King shared special thoughts and congratulations for Mrs. Mary Louise Corn, who is retiring from the Henderson County Board of Public Education after 16 years of service. Dr. King remembered Mrs. Corn as a mentor, friend and an instructional leader. Mrs. Corn said it has been an honor to serve with 32 different board members and 3 Superintendents over her 16 years. Mrs. Corn said that Henderson County is a wonderful community and her main focus was always to teach and care for her students in the classroom and to provide support to the Senior Leadership Team while serving on the School Board. Superintendent Bo Caldwell shared congratulations and well-wishes for Mrs. Corn in her retirement and presented her with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Education.

Mr. Jay Egolf and Mr. Scott Rhodes shared special thoughts and congratulations for Mr. Rick Wood, who is

retiring from the Henderson County Board of Public Education after 12 years of service. Mr. Rhodes stated that Mr. Wood and Mr. Caldwell are two men who have influenced him tremendously in his life and career. Mr. Rhodes thanked Coach Wood for the positive ideals he instilled in him as a coach and teacher and he believes those principles are still characterized in him today thanks to Coach Wood. Mr. Rhodes stated that Mr. and Mrs. Wood were two of the best teachers to ever work in Henderson County. Mr. Wood asked his wife Beverly to join him at the podium and thank her for all of her sacrifices and support over the years. He said that between he and Beverly, they have a combined 81 years of teaching experience. Mr. Wood is grateful to have worked with 13 different board members. He thanked Executive Assistants, Ms. Barbara Blaine, Ms. Toni Lively, Ms. Sharon Walker and Ms. Kathy Johnson for their work with the school board during his tenure. Mr. Wood thanked the current school board members wishing them, the new superintendent and new school board members all good things in the future. Superintendent Bo Caldwell shared congratulations and well-wishes for Mr. Wood in his retirement and presented him with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Education.

Mr. Rick Wood and Superintendent Bo Caldwell shared memories and congratulations for Mr. Michael Absher, who is leaving the Henderson County Board of Public Education after 4 years of service. Mr. Caldwell thanked Mr. Absher for always being an advocate for homeless students and for being a voice of care and concern for the students in Henderson County. Mr. Caldwell stated it was his pleasure to watch Mr. Absher grow up in Henderson County schools and challenged him to never get weary of doing what is right for our community. Mr. Caldwell presented Mr. Absher with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Education.

#### BOARD CHAIRMAN'S OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven expressed his gratitude to all who supported him and voted to re-elect him to the Board of Education on November 3, 2020. He thanked our teachers who were involved in the mock-election across our school system and stated how important it is for our students to learn how the election process works. Mr. Craven shared his best wishes for Mr. Michael Absher, Mr. Rick Wood and Mrs. Mary Louise Corn as they complete their service to the Board of Education. Mr. Craven also acknowledged Superintendent Bo Caldwell and stated that he is 'as gracious as human as I've ever met,' and it was his absolute honor to work with him over the past four years.

#### BOARD MEMBER'S OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Absher stated that he appreciated working with all of the board member and even though they may not have seen eye to eye, he feels that in the end, the board always worked together to do what is best for the children of Henderson County. He stated that Mr. Rick Wood has been his mentor over the years and he appreciated Mrs. Mary Louise Corn's honesty over the years. He acknowledged Mr. Caldwell as a person who always made sure he was taken care of, from elementary school until now. He is proud to have been on the board to hire the next superintendent for Henderson County Schools.

Mr. Egolf shared that there were a lot of victories for a lot of people on November 3, 2020 and is proud of our election process in America. He thanked the teachers involved in the mock elections and stressed their importance for our community.

Ms. Dot Case shared her comments via phone. She is sorry she is not able to attend in person but said it's been her honor to know Mrs. Corn, Mr. Wood and Mr. Caldwell over the years. She shared her appreciation for all they have done for Henderson County Public Schools.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

This is the first meeting since February, 2020, that in-person public comments were an option, due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. There were no in-person public comments.

9 Public Comment email submissions were received prior to the Board meeting and shared with all members of the Board. All submissions will be posted to the Henderson County Board of Public Education website for public access.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

##### A. Meeting Schedule

1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [*Monday, December 14, 2020, 4:00 pm., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm.) (Boardroom)*]

##### B. Minutes – October 13, 2020 (*Regular Business Meeting*)

C. Personnel *(as presented in closed session)*

D. Student Acceptances/Releases *(as presented in closed session)*

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented in Closed Session. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. The motion was approved unanimously.

## OLD BUSINESS

None

## NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval – Beginning Teacher Support Plan – *(Dr. Jan King, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction)*

Dr. Jan King shared congratulations for Apple Valley Middle School second year math teacher, Ms. Shanice Hill, on her selection as the Henderson County Beginning Teacher of the Year for 2020. Ms. Hill will prepare a portfolio and compete at the state level in November.

Dr. King stated there is a minor change to the Henderson County Beginning Teacher Support Plan due to an update to NC General Statutes. Principals and teachers are now required to participate in a survey providing feedback to the NC Department of Instruction.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion to approve the revised Beginning Teacher Support Plan as presented. Mr. Rick Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. *(The motion was approved unanimously.)*

B. Approval – School Improvement Plans 2020-2022 – *(Dr. Jan King, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction)*

Dr. Jan King stated that like many districts across the state, Henderson County has transitioned school improvement planning to the NCSTAR/IndiStar platform. This platform is provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) at no-cost to districts. Training sessions on the new planning tool were provided by Dr. Jeremy Gibbs, NCDPI Regional Case Manager. She continued, each School Improvement Team has assessed the required Key Indicators of NCSTAR, selected targeted goals for improvement, and mapped a plan for assessing and monitoring the school's progress. Dr. King stated that for Transparency and Public Access, Board members may access and review School Improvement Plans online using information in the guiding document or as PDFs with a link provided to the board. Dr. King said, when the plans are approved by the Board, guest access for all school plans will be posted on their websites for review. Updates to a school's information will be added after each School Improvement meeting.

Mr. Craven asked for a motion to approve the School Improvement Plans for 2020-2022. Mr. Michael Absher made a motion to approve the School Improvement Plans for 2020-2022 as presented. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. *(The motion was approved unanimously.)*

C. Approval – HCPS/Enterprise Fleet Management – *(Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent Administrative Services/Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Dr. Bryant introduced Mr. Chad Elbert from Enterprise Fleet Management. Mr. Elbert presented information on a proposed fleet management program for Henderson County Schools. Dr. Bryant summarized, by partnering with Enterprise Fleet Management, Henderson County Public Schools would reduce vehicle operating costs significantly by reducing the age of the fleet. Leveraging an open-end lease maximizes cash flow and recognizes equity from vehicles sold. By shifting from reactively replacing old vehicles to planning vehicle purchases, HCPS will be able to replace 11 of its oldest vehicles within a year with no additional budget allocation (compared to paying cash for 2 approved vehicles). Furthermore, by utilizing Enterprise's resale channels and selling units at the optimum time, Henderson County Public Schools can implement a 5-year vehicle cycle in which all units remain under warranty while maintaining a sustainable budget year over year.

Board members asked several questions regarding the logistics of the program and requested more information about this program and other possible vendors before agreeing to enter into a contract. After discussion, Mr. Craven asked that this request be tabled until a future meeting.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion that the HCPS/Enterprise Fleet Management request be tabled until a later date when more information could be presented and board member questions could be answered. Mr. Michael Absher seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. *(The motion to table the request was approved unanimously.)*

D. Approval – 2020-2021 Initial Budget Resolution – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the 2020-21 Henderson County Public Schools' Initial Budget Resolution for approval. He said this serves as the beginning budget for all funds for subsequent amendments. He shared that the total Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Funds are consistent with the 2019-20 Preliminary Budget previously approved. While the total remains the same, adjustments were made to reflect legislative and budgetary changes made from the State and with Covid funding. Mr. Sochia said the State Public School Fund reflects the most current dollar and position allotments as directed by the State. Likewise, the Federal Grants Fund reflects the budgets as approved by DPI to date. The Child Nutrition and Child Care Enterprise Funds reflect continuation budgets with adjustments for all legislative benefit changes and participation data which has changed along with the numerous attendance changes at the schools.

Mr. Sochia stated that we have received federal allotments to assist with Covid-19 expenditures. He added, we just received \$300,000 in CRF funds that must be spent on PPE by the end of 2020. Mr. Caldwell added that we have a CARES Team that meets weekly to monitor and ensure the federal funds are being used effectively. Mr. Sochia added that since March, we have received funds from the USDA to help us with our Child Nutrition costs. Board members shared their concerns again with the Child Care negative balances and stressed the importance of this program breaking even. They reiterated the fund balance will soon run out for the program if we continue to use it to pay the bills. Board members challenged the leadership team to find a solution or they feel difficult decisions will have to be made regarding the future of the program.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Initial Budget Resolution for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as presented. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mrs. Corn, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Wood, Yes. *The motion was approved unanimously.*

## BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

A. Equity Focus Update – *(Dr. Jan King, Assistant Superintendent)*

Dr. Jan King stated that we are continuing our district wide conversations on equity. She said that three Henderson County teachers will participate in a professional development opportunity through WRESA provided by the National Paideia Center titled, *Dialogues on Racial Justice*. This training opportunity will be built around four virtual seminar discussions on profound texts by renowned African American writers, activists and artists. Ms. Megan Pridmore, Bruce Drysdale Elementary; Ms. Lori Beck Peterson, Hendersonville Middle School; and Ms. Kendra Henry, Innovative High School, will participate in the training. They have committed to train other Henderson County teachers upon their program completion.

B. Class Size Affidavit – *(Superintendent Bo Caldwell)*

Superintendent Caldwell updated the Board of Education on the district's compliance with the North Carolina General Assembly's K-3 class size mandates. The class size legislation allows up to 21 students in any individual class in grades K-3 in our district. The class size average for grades K-3 for the district has to be 18 students or less. Bruce Drysdale Elementary is over the 21 allotted students per class in kindergarten. With annual reporting coming due at the end of November, the school's increase in kindergarten enrollment necessitated a posting of an additional teacher position to serve students and be in compliance with the law. At the time of the Board meeting, applications were being taken for a kindergarten teacher at Bruce Drysdale Elementary with hiring anticipated in the coming weeks. On the advice of Board Attorney Chris Campbell, the required Class Size Affidavit could be sent to NCDPI with an accompanying letter explaining the district's steps towards compliance.

Ms. Dot Case left the meeting at 6:04pm.

C. Return to Athletics Update – (Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent, Mr. Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer)

Henderson County Athletic Director, Mr. Scott Rhodes, presented information regarding our return to athletics for 2020-2021. He stated that it has been 236 days without high school sports in North Carolina. Mr. Rhodes shared that off-season workouts for high school student-athletes resumed on June 22 and off-season workouts resumed for middle school student-athletes on August 25. Under the direction and guidance of our Pardee UNC Health athletic training staff, we have implemented daily Covid-19 screenings for coaches, athletes, and support personnel. He said that face coverings are required for all students, staff, and visitors at any HCPS facility. Social distancing requirements are in place whenever possible and athletic areas are cleaned and sanitized each day. As of November 9, 14 high school athletes and zero middle school athletes have tested positive for Covid-19.

Mr. Rhodes presented the following sports calendar revisions from the NCHSAA for 2020-21.

<p><u>Season 1</u> Volleyball and Cross Country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: November 4, 2020</li> <li>● First Contest: November 16, 2020</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul> <p><u>Season 2</u> Swimming and Diving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: November 23, 2020</li> <li>● First Contest: December 7, 2020</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul> <p><u>Season 3</u> Basketball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: December 7, 2020</li> <li>● First Contest: January 4, 2021</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul> <p><u>Season 4</u> Men's Soccer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: January 11, 2021</li> <li>● First Contest: January 25, 2021</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul>	<p><u>Season 5</u> Football</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: February 8, 2021</li> <li>● First Contest: February 26, 2021</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 7</li> </ul> <p><u>Season 6</u> Golf (M &amp; W), Tennis (M), Soccer (W), Softball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: March 1, 2021</li> <li>● First Contest: March 15, 2021</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul> <p><u>Season 7</u> Baseball, Tennis (W), Track and Field, Wrestling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Start Date: April 12, 2021</li> <li>● First Contest: April 26, 2021</li> <li>● Number of Contests: 14</li> </ul>
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Fan participation for outside sporting events will be limited to 100 (home fans only); Fan participation for inside sporting events will be limited to 25 (home fans only). Players, coaches, workers, entertainers and support staff do not count toward the capacity limits. These limits are subject to change based off of orders from the Governor. Ticket distribution will be as follows:

High Schools

- Tickets will be distributed equally between student athletes.
- Touchless Tickets
  - Spectators will purchase tickets electronically and show their receipt at the door using their cellular device.

Middle Schools

- Tickets will be distributed equally between student athletes.
- Student athletes will pre-sale tickets and patrons will show their ticket at the door.

Mr. Rhodes discussed the projected gate revenues associated with the new schedules. The district-wide, three-year gate revenue average for high school athletics is \$106,000; the projected high school gate revenue for 2020-21 is \$38,000. The three-year average gate revenue for middle school athletics is \$17,000; the projected middle school gate revenue for 2020-21 is \$14,000. These revenue shortfalls will affect athletics' spending at all middle and high schools for the year.

Mr. Rhodes stressed the need for consistent communication between the district, our schools, parents and student athletes during these uncertain times. He said that high school home games will be streamed live through the NFHS Sports Network using their Pixellot Camera Systems. [www.nfhsnetwork.com](http://www.nfhsnetwork.com). The fee to access the NFHS Sports Network will be: Annual Cost = \$69.99/year or Monthly Pass = \$10.99/month. Any person wishing to access the live stream must pay the fee directly to the NFHS Sports Network. Mr. Rhodes stated that we are

investigating how to live stream middle school contests for free using YouTube Live, more information will be shared when finalized.

**D. Construction Update – (Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent)**

Dr. John Bryant presented a time lapse video from the *Work Zone Cam* showing the progression of work at the Hendersonville High School construction project. The video can be accessed at:

<https://public.workzonedcam.com/projects/henderson1/hendersonville/camera2/archive/timelapse?archiveId=Home>

**E. Child Care Update – (Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent and Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)**

Dr. Bryant share the financial position of the Henderson County Child Care Program for the year ended June 30, 2020 as follows: Revenues: \$1,136,914; Expenses: \$1,159,502; FY Operational Profit/(Loss): (\$22,588); Unaudited Fund Balance: \$230,000.

Dr. Bryant shared a chart showing the financials reported by month since July 2020:

	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020 (P)	Nov 2020
<b>Projected/ Actual Revenue</b>	\$47,805	\$54,240	\$72,451	\$50,040	
<b>Projected/ Actual Expenses</b>	\$73,051	\$62,370	\$85,897	\$77,326	
<b>Profit/(Loss)</b>	(\$25,246)	(\$8,130)	(\$13,446)	(\$27,326)	

Dr. Bryant said the Child Care Program, as it stands now, would have a fund balance of around \$75,000 left by the end of the 20-21 school year. Dr. Bryant emphasized that board approved cost adjustments formulated before the pandemic have not been realized due to the tremendous change in attendance during the school closures. Limiting the number of students who can attend (due to governor mandates) and the number of days in which students can attend, has contributed to the loss of revenue. He stressed that if our students had been attending as they typically would, with the newly approved cost adjustments, the operational loss for the program would be at zero for the year. Mr. Craven stated this is not a normal year, the program continues to lose money and we must find a solution to this loss of revenue. Mr. Craven, Mrs. Holt and Mr. Egolf shared concerns on the viability of the program and believe hard decisions will need to be made in the near future. Mr. Craven reiterated his position that the program has to stop running in the negative and charged Dr. Bryant with working toward a resolution in the coming months.

**F. Financial Statements – (Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)**

The attached financial statement presents the following results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of October 31, 2020. Revenues received total \$11,859,457. Expenditures made total \$7,127,528. For the month of October, the expenditures were within \$20,000 of the previous year. This also leaves enough cash available to make the local supplement payment with November payroll.

Results of operations of the Enterprise Fund for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of September 30, 2020:

- Child Nutrition: Revenues for the first quarter were \$776,637 and expenditures were \$1,064,069. While operating under plan B and continuing summer feeding, revenues are down both in USDA reimbursements with fewer students in school, and in lunch sales which are essentially eliminated. Expenditures are down in food purchases with the decreased number of meals served.
- Child Care: First quarter revenues total \$172,340. This is down from normal operations due to reduced capacity in our schools on a daily basis. Expenditures were \$221,319. Payroll is slightly reduced from last year, but has reached a relatively consistent level at \$75,000 per month.

**G. Technology Upgrades to the Central Office Board Room – (Superintendent Bo Caldwell and Mr. Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer)**

Mr. Caldwell acknowledged Mr. Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer, for his ongoing research while exploring options for updating the technology in the Central Office board room. Mr. Fender has visited several facilities with varying sound and video set-ups evaluating what would be the best option for Henderson County

Schools. Mr. Fender stated the cost estimates range from \$35,000 to \$79,000. He feels to do the job ‘right’ would cost around \$80,000. Mr. Caldwell stated that Mr. Fender will bring more detailed information to the Board for consideration at the December meeting.

#### H. Return to Learn Update – (*Superintendent Bo Caldwell and Leadership Team*)

Superintendent Bo Caldwell and the leadership team presented an update on our current Return to Learn Plan. Mr. Caldwell said that Henderson County *Harvard Covid* number is 15.5 as of November 9, 2020. He reminded board members that the Henderson County District Dashboard is updated daily by 9 am and it shows the number of cases reported specifically in our school system.

Mr. Caldwell said that Henderson County Health Director, Mr. Steve Smith told him that optional antigen testing will be available at our schools beginning next week. These antigen tests will allow us to receive test results much quicker and will allow the school nurses to begin contact tracing much sooner if there is a positive result. Only students and staff who are symptomatic will have the option to be tested. Dr. Bryant reminded everyone the difference between a negative test result and quarantine requirements. A negative test only confirms a ‘no’ to transmission and students must have a negative test result in order to return to school. The quarantine process is still handled by the Henderson County Health Department and it is by their orders that staff and students are required to quarantine. He said that the quarantine time is dependent on when you were exposed to a positive case.

Dr. Jan King stated that third grade students returned to full-time face-to-face instruction on October 30, 2020. She and senior staff have been working with elementary principals to collapse sections and reshuffle class numbers to reduce the number of K-3 teachers who are teaching both in-person and online classes simultaneously. She said that Pods have also been created across schools grouping online students together under one teacher. Dr. King said that parents have been supportive of the moves and it has helped to reduce the number of teachers teaching both online and virtual classes simultaneously as well.

Dr. King said the teacher feedback from the middle and high school survey presented the following results: Teachers are glad to have their students back in class; Teachers feel they need more planning time to assist with the virtual and in-person classes; Many teachers feel the main barriers at this time are tough student schedules, lack of planning time, and student engagement (online).

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt and Mr. Jay Egolf feel that fourth and fifth (4/5) grade students should be allowed to return to school full-time. Mr. Egolf said the District Dashboard numbers are staying low and he feels we could bring more students back. Mrs. Holt and Mr. Egolf would like to see a plan on how that could be implemented.

Leadership team members stated that adding 4/5 graders back at this time, would remove any social distancing opportunities by putting additional students back in our buildings. Mr. Craven suggested bringing back 4/5 graders in January. Mrs. Holt feels January is too long to wait to bring back 4/5 graders. Mr. Caldwell stated that if we add 4/5 kids back to our schools, there will be no social distancing on buses and if the Board were to make the decision to send them back, our 4/5 classrooms will have high class size numbers and they won’t have the 6 feet of separation in classes and maybe not even 3 feet. Mr. Caldwell stated that many teachers feel they are finally getting into a rhythm with the Return to Learn Plan and would like to keep the kids as they are for a while to see what happens with the Covid cases.

Dr. Bryant added that we are proud the Dashboard reads as it does; Our goal was to open our schools safely and to stay open. He feels the work being done now by students and staff, while following safety procedures, is why the dashboard numbers are what they are. Dr. Bryant said that the leadership team thinks of all other grade levels and getting them all back to school as soon as possible.

Mr. Egolf feels strongly that we are not allowing 4/5 grade parents the opportunity to choose if they want to send their children back to school or not. He feels we must give our parents a chance to decide for themselves what their comfort level is and allow them an option to send their students back to school. Mr. Craven asked Dr. Bryant when he feels 4/5 grade students might be able to return? Dr. Bryant replied that he isn’t comfortable providing a date at this time and added that the board had given them the latitude to get third grade students back in class and that has been completed.

Mrs. Holt asked about testing. Mr. Caldwell said he’s only heard rumors and Dr. King will provide information when it’s received from DPI.

Mrs. Holt said she had heard rumors that DHHS was considering moving the system back to Plan C. Mr. Caldwell stated no information has come through his office regarding that rumor.

I. General Operations – (*Superintendent Bo Caldwell*)

Superintendent Bo Caldwell stated it has been his honor and privilege to serve as your Superintendent of the Henderson County Public Schools.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Mary Louise Corn moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Rick Wood. A Roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mr. Absher, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes. The motion was approved unanimously at 7:26pm.

Minutes approved: December 14, 2020