

Henderson County Board of Public Education
MINUTES
August 9, 2021

The Henderson County Board of Public Education held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 9, 2021, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC.

The Board received public comment via email prior to the meeting and during open session. All Public Comment emails were shared with each board member prior to the meeting and then posted to the HCPS website for public access on August 10, 2021. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link at, <http://hcpsnc.org/live>.

Board Members Present: Blair Craven, Chairperson; Amy Lynn Holt, Vice Chairperson; Robert Bridges; Dot Case; Stacey Caskey; Jay Egolf and Kathy Revis.
Administrative Staff Present: John Bryant, Ed.D., Superintendent; Wendy Frye, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer and Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer
Administrative Staff Absent: Mr. Rick Fender; Chief Technology Officer
Attorney Present: Mr. Chris Campbell
Board Clerk: Mrs. Stephanie Alfrey

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 pm and led all those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Craven acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Jay Egolf. *(Unanimously approved.)*

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven said he has no observations at this time.

BOARD OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Jay Egolf noted he is appreciative of the number of people who have attended the Board meetings and have been involved over the last couple of weeks. He wishes all the Board meetings had this number of attendees.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Blair Craven stated that 145 pre-submitted public comments were received for the August 9, 2021 meeting. All emails were shared with Board members prior to the meeting and will be posted to the Henderson County Board of Public Education website for public access after the meeting. Mr. Craven noted with 32 public comments each person will have one minute per person in order to stay within the Board policy timeframe. Any HCPS student will be allowed the full three minutes to speak.

Indian Jackson spoke about Critical Race Theory and how we need to teach the correct history of America. She also talked about the need for diversity in the teaching staff.

Sarah Cosgrove thanked the Board for their service. She talked about the medically fragile and the students who don't have the privilege to do virtual school and asked for immediate reconsideration of the mask optional mandate.

Christina Holtgreven spoke about her concern for optional masks and how we cannot go back to virtual school. She said school is the safest place for kids.

Abigail Fincher, a HCPS student, said she is concerned about going to school with no mask mandate in place. She noted she would have to do virtual school if masks are not required and that virtual school did not work well for her last school year.

Brighton Carpenter, a HCPS student, spoke about wanting to keep masks in schools. She loves school and wants to protect her family and friends. She thinks kids would rather wear masks than to do virtual school again.

Ari Nichols, a HCPS student, said he really likes school and his teachers. He doesn't mind doing his part to protect his 2-year-old brother who can't be vaccinated yet.

Heather Reed thanked the Board for the good work they did last school year with evidence-based decisions. She would like the Board to make evidence-based decisions this school year as well to continue to keep our children safe.

Beth Stang spoke of the strong recommendations in the StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit that provide a layered protection approach and asked for masks to be mandatory.

Aaron Corbin talked about how the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines of masking provides a safe learning environment and asked the Board to reconsider the mask mandate.

Amy Johnson, MD, spoke about the higher infection rates with the Delta variant and how masks work well when everyone is masked.

Deborah Barwick talked about how masks are about keeping schools open and children safe.

Tasha Woodall spoke about how making masks optional takes away the best choice to protect our children in school.

Aaron Fishler, RRT/RCP, noted the rise in COVID-19 patients in the hospitals and how masks are a barrier to help stop the spread.

Lauren Carlin talked about the importance of in person learning and asked the Board to keep the school conditions safe in order to keep children in school.

Ann Corbin spoke about how children need to be in school and how schools don't have the staff to deal with an increase in staff quarantines.

Carmen Gentry talked about how spread within the schools will contribute to community spread.

Claire Nichols spoke about the importance of children being in school and asked the Board to reconsider masks to make them mandatory.

Sara Smith talked about how no mask mandate will increase the days a student will be required to quarantine as a close contact. She said a mask mandate is needed to lessen the number of days quarantined.

Rebekah Carpenter spoke about how following CDC guidelines such as masks can keep our community safe and healthy.

Darla Schmidt asked the Board to reconsider and make masks mandatory. She suggested polling the HCPS staff and parents prior to future Board decisions on masks.

Darin Jennings talked about why a mask mandate is needed in the schools.

Victoria Shantz spoke about the need for mask mandate because not all children are eligible for the vaccine.

Blake Honeycutt talked about the tuition expense for his child to attend Buncombe County Schools where masks are mandatory. He feels Henderson County Public Schools should pay the tuition due to safety concerns because masks are optional in HCPS schools.

Dr. Susan Ortiz spoke about reversing the Board decision for masks to be optional when school starts or to consider making masks mandatory for children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for the vaccine at this time.

Jay Carey spoke about following the science and reinstating the mask mandate.

Raphael Morales thanked the Board and everyone in attendance and asked as a community member for the Board to require masks in schools.

Leslie Carey asked for the Board to reconsider masks being optional this school year. She thanked the Board for all the time they put into caring for children.

Cortney McCall thanked the Board for their decision to make masks optional at the August 2 Special Called Board meeting and for providing a virtual option for those who don't feel comfortable with masks being optional.

Stephen Hertz asked for masks to be required in schools like at the college level this school year.

Priscilla Montelongo, a HCPS student, noted that she is thankful to go back to school after the Board voted to make masks optional at the August 2 Special Called Meeting.

Danyul Jackson spoke about the need for masks in schools to protect the students, staff, school volunteers, and the community from the spread of COVID-19.

Isaiah Byrd, a HCPS student, asked for the Board to keep masks optional in the schools. He noted that no one can hear him when he speaks with a mask on. He thanked the Board for listening to him.

Pennylane Frost, a HCPS student, thanked the Board for letting masks be a choice this school year.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Meeting Schedule
 - 1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [*Monday, September 13, 2021, 4:00 p.m., (Boardroom)*]
- B. Minutes
 - 1. June 30, 2021 (*Regular Business Meeting*)
 - 2. August 2, 2021 (*Special Called Meeting*)
- C. Personnel (*as presented in closed session*)
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases (*as presented in closed session*)
- E. DOT Easement (*as presented in closed session*)

Mr. Blair Craven called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of item E. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. 2021 Spring Policy Updates – (Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)
 - 1. Approval – Policy 1510/4200/7270, School Safety
 - 2. Approval – Policy 1610/7800, Professional and Staff Development
 - 3. Approval – Policy 1710/4020/7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
 - 4. Approval – Policy 2310: Public Participation at Meetings
 - 5. Approval – Policy 2440, Policy Review and Evaluation
 - 6. Approval – Policy 3300, School Calendar and Time for Learning
 - 7. Approval – Policy 3460, Graduation Requirements
 - 8. Approval – Policy 3610, Counseling Program
 - 9. Approval – Policy 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
 - 10. Approval – Policy 4040/7310, Staff-Student Relations
 - 11. Approval – Policy 4125, Homeless Students
 - 12. Approval – Policy 4240/7312, Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
 - 13. Approval – Policy 4335, Criminal Behavior
 - 14. Approval – Policy 4400, Attendance
 - 15. Approval – Policy 5000, Schools and the Community
 - 16. Approval – Policy 6120, Student Health Services
 - 17. Approval – Policy 6320, Use of Student Transportation Services
 - 18. Approval – Policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
 - 19. Approval – Policy 7510, Leave

- 20. Approval – Policy 7720, Employee Political Activities
- 21. Approval – Policy 8310, Annual Independent Audit
- 22. Approval – Policy 8341, Limited Claim Settlement

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt inquired if policy 6120, Student Health Services, in section B includes the mental health plan information. Mr. Taylor noted the policy talks about the school system mental health plan. The mental health plan will be brought to the Board for approval at their September meeting. Dr. Wendy Frye said for the first time the NC State Board of Education is requiring District School Board's to approve the mental health plan. She mentioned part of the mental health plan that will be presented includes our suicide plan that we have had in place for some time. Mrs. Holt asked if policy 7510, Leave, addressed the vaccinated people who can continue to work. She noted the language references unvaccinated personnel. Dr. John Bryant said the policy will meet the requirements. The StrongSchools NC Toolkit addresses vaccinated personnel. Mrs. Holt talked about policy 7720, Employee Political Activities, stating employees should not bring their personal political views into the classroom. She asked if teachers could be reminded of that at the beginning of each school year. Dr. Bryant noted that any concern brought to their attention is addressed. He said, as Ms. Dot Case always reminds them, it is important to make sure staff know the policies. They would be glad to make sure all teachers are aware of the policy. Mr. Jay Egolf made a motion to approve the Spring Policy Updates in numbers one through 22 as presented to the Board for first reading. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded. (Unanimously Approved.)

The policies listed below have only minor changes to wording, legal references, and/or cross references.

- 23. Approval – Policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement
- 24. Approval – Policy 3102, Online Instruction
- 25. Approval – Policy 3230/7330, Copyright Compliance
- 26. Approval – Policy 3640/5130, Student Voter Registration and Preregistration
- 27. Approval – Policy 4050, Children of Military Families
- 28. Approval – Policy 4270/6145, Concussion and Head Injury
- 29. Approval – Policy 4700, Student Records
- 30. Approval – Policy 5020, Visitors to the Schools
- 31. Approval – Policy 5030, Community Use of Facilities
- 32. Approval – Policy 5070/7350, Public Records - Retention, Release and Disposition
- 33. Approval – Policy 5071/7351, Electronically Stored Information Retention
- 34. Approval – Policy 5210, Distribution and Display of Non-School Material
- 35. Approval – Policy 6140, Student Wellness
- 36. Approval – Policy 6210, Organization of School Nutrition Services
- 37. Approval – Policy 6220, Operation of School Nutrition Services
- 38. Approval – Policy 6230, School Meal and Competitive Foods Standards
- 39. Approval – Policy 6305, Safety and Student Transportation Services
- 40. Approval – Policy 6315, Drivers
- 41. Approval – Policy 6321, Bus Routes
- 42. Approval – Policy 6450, Purchase of Services
- 43. Approval – Policy 7100, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
- 44. Approval – Policy 7130, Licensure
- 45. Approval – Policy 7430, Substitute Teachers
- 46. Approval – Policy 9020, Facility Design

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to waive Board policy on second reading and approve the Spring Policy Updates in numbers 23 through 46 as presented to the Board for first reading. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded. (Unanimously Approved.)

B. Discussion - Hendersonville High School Stadium Scope – (Dr. John M. Bryant, Superintendent)

Superintendent John Bryant presented the four options from LS3P/PSA on the Hendersonville High School stadium.

- Option A would address the stormwater line replacement; new rubberized asphalt track with the track rotated for safety; new artificial turf field, shifted for safety; all field events relocated to D-Zones, and realignment of field lights. Cost would be approximately \$2,144,609.

- Option B would address stormwater line replacement; new rubberized asphalt track, rotated for safety; new artificial turf field, centered in track; all field events relocated to D-Zones; and realignment of field lights. Cost would be approximately \$2,138,419.

He noted the additional challenges with the Hendersonville High School Stadium are poor sight lines from existing home bleachers center on 31- or 38-year line; home concessions no longer on path of travel from new main entry & parking to bleachers; home & visitor bathrooms inadequate and not handicap accessible; extensive grading would be needed to provide regulation slope to the track; poor sight lines from visitor bleachers; no handicap accessible visitor seating; visitor bleachers in poor condition and overhanging on the sidewalk. The next two options would address these concerns.

- Option C would address stormwater line replacement; new rubberized asphalt track, rotated for safety; new artificial turf field, shifted or centered in track; all field events relocated to D-Zones; realignment of field lights; reconfigure home bleachers; new home concessions, renovate existing home concessions in order to enlarge. Cost would be approximately \$3,344,752.
- Option D would address stormwater line replacement; new rubberized asphalt track, rotated for safety; new artificial turf field, shifted or centered in track; all field events relocated to D-Zones; realignment of field lights; reconfigure home bleachers; regrade track & field to regulation slope with retaining walls at the perimeter of the track; new home concessions and bathrooms; new visitor bleachers; new visitor concessions; and renovate existing home concessions in order to enlarge. Cost would be approximately \$5,201,370.

The Henderson County Board of Public Education previously discussed the four options at their July Board Workshop. Mr. Blair Craven and Mr. Jay Egolf along with Assistant Superintendent Scott Rhodes were part of a Joint Facilities Committee meeting with the Henderson County Board of Commissioners to discuss the options as well. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners has asked for the Henderson County Board of Public Education to give them the recommendation for what option the School Board would prefer and to clarify where they stand with this scope of work.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey noted the Henderson County Board of Public Education discussed during the July Board Workshop to do option C plus or option D minus. The grading of the field was a part of that discussion.

Mr. Blair Craven noted that leveling the field is the biggest cost difference between option C and option D. Options A and B do not address centering the bleachers with the field. He thinks the visitors' bleachers need to be addressed because they overhang onto the sidewalk as well as not being centered with the field if the field is centered. He said after the Joint Facilities Committee meeting it was determined a separate visitors concession stand is not needed. Mr. Craven recommends we should look at option C adding the option for the visitors' bleachers and visitors' restrooms along with removing the new visitors' concession stand. He noted it's more than the work done at the other three high schools when the turf fields were done. However, they are looking at the field at a brand-new facility. He mentioned we need to be fiscally responsible and get the Hendersonville High School stadium addressed so we can move on to the work that needs to be done at the other schools. He noted we can be partners with the Henderson County Board of Commissioners if we need to in order to get this stadium scope of work done. Dr. Bryant spoke about the Henderson County Board of Commissioners discussing at their last meeting the unknowns remaining to complete the Hendersonville High School project since the project is still ongoing. The School Board needs to determine what level of invest they are willing to make on the stadium work beyond what the Henderson County Board of Commissioners did for the other three high schools.

Mrs. Holt said the restrooms have to be addressed because they are not handicap accessible. She noted the cost of materials has increased since the turf and track work were done at the other three high schools.

Mr. Jay Egolf said the four high schools should be treated equally. He said the turf and rubberized track is fair since that was done at the other high schools. He noted it is also fair to shift the track/field, fix the home bleacher alignment with the field once it is shifted, and fix the lighting for the field. The items beyond that such as the restrooms, the concession stand, and the visitors' bleachers should be a cost to the school system.

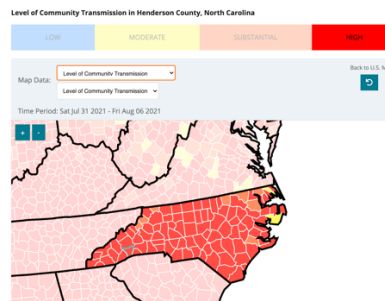
The School Board discussed funding options to be able to address items at the stadium beyond what the Henderson County Board of Commissioners determine to approve. They discussed MRTS funds and fund balance along with upcoming projects that may be eligible for ESSER funding. The School Board agreed that any projects related to school safety need to be done and no adjustments to delay those projects should be made to them when looking at funding options. Dr. Bryant said they can get a list of projects together for the School Board. Mrs. Holt said the plans for the MRTS funds were presented to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners. She thinks the

projects presented for use with MRTS should stay and fund balance should be used. Mr. Craven said using fund balance is an option. He noted the restrooms have to be addressed. Additionally, the School Board discussed the time it would take for the stadium options to be completed and when the field would be ready for use by athletes. The consensus of the Henderson County Board of Public Education was to request that the Henderson County Board of Commissioners proceed with stadium work identified in Option B while providing the Board of Education the opportunity to fund additional elements of priority, specifically restroom facilities, concessions, and visitor bleachers.

BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

A. RETURN TO LEARN UPDATE

Superintendent John M. Bryant shared the local health pandemic indicator numbers from the Harvard Global Health Institute. He reminded everyone that research data from the Harvard Global Health Institute (HGHI) indicates risk levels that are calculated based on daily cases per 100,000 people using a seven-day rolling average. As of August 8, 2021, the rolling average in Henderson County was 25.4/100,000 people. Henderson County is in the moderate/light yellow tier on the NCDHHS County Alert System Report as of July 22. NC DHHS previously provided this alert system report. Beginning August 2, this alert system report has been discontinued. Beginning Aug. 6, 2021, NCDHHS transitioned to using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 Community Transmission Map to monitor COVID-19 activity in North Carolina counties. This map is updated daily and uses a combination of total cases per 100,000 population and percent positivity in the last 7 days to measure the level of community transmission in counties. Henderson County is in the high transmission area.



Since August 2, 2021, the HCPS district dashboard for COVID-19 cases has been updated. The information is updated the business day after at 9 am. When transmission in our community was at zero, the district dashboard was suspended in June and was not utilized during summer learning. As positive cases presented in our two year-round schools, phone calls were going out daily to those communities to notify them of the positive cases. The school district felt it was important to the update communities with the district dashboard as well.

The expectations of the information parents can receive and from who they can receive the information are the same as they were last school year. The expectations are

HCPS will:

- Send a SwiftK12 call to all families in the school when there is a positive case (staff or student)
- Partner with the Henderson County Department of Public Health for contract tracing
- Provide as transparent reporting as possible while still protecting confidentiality
- Temporarily close areas where the infected person spent time for extra cleaning
- Monitor symptoms of students and staff, as well as case counts
- Send Student and staff home when they are ill
- Continue to teach and learn from home when under quarantine
- Continue to provide important health and safety information to families

Health Department will:

- Conduct contact tracing to identify potential exposure on campus based on proximity, time together, and lack of face covering
- Notify any person identified as a close contact, instruct them to self-quarantine, and provide further guidance on quarantine and testing

We will not:

- Provide personally identifiable information of an infected person
- Immediately close school for a positive case

The hardest questions to address are what we will not do. Our School Nurses are the ones who often receive the frustration and anger from parents/guardians. Dr. Bryant said there were 19 student and five staff COVID-19 positive cases for a total of 24. It was the operational number for about the first 30 days of this school year at the two flex schools. The year over year data for when we have been in school for 30 days in February and March 2021 was Hendersonville Elementary had four student and one staff COVID-19 positive cases and Bruce Drysdale Elementary had five student and two staff COVID-19 positive cases. As directed by the School Board at the August 2 Special Called Meeting, the district administrators at these two schools reported current school-affected positive case and quarantine numbers. As of Monday afternoon, 19 school-affected positive cases had been reported, and 44 students at Hendersonville and Bruce Drysdale elementary schools had been quarantined as a part of contact tracing due to school affected positives.

Dr. Bryant shared the StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) was last updated on July 29. The most significant change was the word should to could. The Toolkit reads “The StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit was updated on July 21 to align to the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools updated on July 9, 2021. To allow for operational transition time, the provisions of this Toolkit are effective July 30th at 5pm.”

The summary of the major updates to the Toolkit from the previous version:

- Each section of the Toolkit has been organized into categories that prioritize implementation of the strategies that have been shown to be most effective in lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in school sessions and school activities.
- Strategies that SHOULD be implemented by all schools. These are strategies that, if not implemented, create conditions of high risk for COVID-19 exposure and spread. NCDHHS strongly advises that school leaders adopt all the strategies in the SHOULD sections.
- Strategies that school leaders COULD CONSIDER adopting. These are strategies to provide additional layers of prevention and that, if implemented, will further reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

From the StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit, Operational Flexibility and Planning for Different Scenarios are as follows:

“The Toolkit has been updated to provide school leaders with greater flexibility in implementing the layered prevention strategies based on current COVID-19 trends and updated CDC guidance. School leaders should continue to consult with local public health officials for input on community transmission and vaccine uptake to make local decisions. School leaders should continue to maintain plans for different potential scenarios depending on what restrictions are deemed necessary by state or local public health leaders at any time in the school year to control the spread of the disease. Strategies that SHOULD be implemented by all schools. These are strategies that, if not implemented, create conditions of high risk for COVID-19 exposure and spread. NCDHHS strongly advises that school leaders adopt all the strategies in the SHOULD sections. If a school does not require all individuals to wear a mask, they should ensure a layered mitigation strategy, including physical distancing, ventilation, hand hygiene, adequate access to diagnostic and screening testing and closely monitor for increases in COVID-19 cases.”

At the August 2 Special Called Meeting, Dr. Bryant noted the Board elected to not do the following:

- HCPS does not require all children and staff in schools K-12th grade to wear face coverings consistently when indoors. Face coverings for all HCPS students, staff, and visitors are optional, beginning August 23, 2021.
- HCPS does not require teachers and staff to report vaccination status.
- HCPS does not require teachers and staff who are unvaccinated, or do not disclose vaccine status, participate in screening/testing programs.
- HCPS has not incorporated a screening testing strategy consistent with CDC recommendations, including required screening testing for unvaccinated teachers and staff.

According to the StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit, quarantine is required for an individual who has been a close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes cumulatively over a 24-hour period) of someone who is determined positive with COVID-19 either through testing or symptom consistent diagnosis, with the following three exceptions:

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms do NOT need to quarantine after a close contact. Individual should get tested 3-5 days after exposure and wear a mask around others until receiving a negative test result.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered and do not have symptoms do NOT have to quarantine.
- Students who are not fully vaccinated after a close contact in a classroom or other school setting if masks were being worn appropriately and consistently by both the person with COVID-19 and the potentially exposed person do NOT need to quarantine.

Quarantine Protocols from Henderson County Department of Public Health (HCDPH).



The School Nurses under the direction of Henderson County Department of Public Health (HCDPH) determines the quarantine times for individuals. HCDPH is the only ones who can adjudicate the quarantine and not the school system. Mrs. Holt asked for clarification about the time period that is the look back when determining a close contact from the information Crystal O'Dell presented at the August 2 Special Called Meeting. Dr. Bryant said he would get clarification on the time period for the look back. Mrs. Stacey Caskey asked if all children are wearing a mask and a child tests positive, are there any quarantines. Dr. Bryant said if the face covering is being worn consistently and properly, then no resulting quarantines. Mrs. Caskey followed up to ask if with the masks being made optional if we could have a carousel of children being quarantined. Dr. Bryant acknowledged that to be a possibility. Mrs. Caskey asked for a report of resulting quarantines. Dr. Bryant said we will track that data point. He spoke about how every circumstance and situation is different when determining quarantine periods such as a vaccinated high school student. Mrs. Caskey asked at what point does it become educationally unsound. Dr. Bryant said everyone in education knows that a child in school all day, every day is the best circumstance for that child. Pre-COVID the school system talked about the importance of a child being in school. Mrs. Caskey asked if it could cause a child to repeat a year. Dr. Bryant said it would be a concern for academic progress. Mrs. Holt asked why children who wearing masks having to quarantine. Dr. Bryant spoke of an instance where a child wears a face covering all day then at lunch where face coverings are not in place while eating that could result in quarantines. Mr. Robert Bridges asked if face coverings are required to be worn outside at this time. Dr. Bryant said not at this time. Ms. Dot Case asked where the quarantine information can be found and asked if teachers are following the same quarantine time. Dr. Bryant noted we will be adding it to our websites. Right now the current guidance on how Health Departments should operate can be found on the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) website. He said the quarantine time for teachers depend on vaccination status. Dr. Kathy Revis noted that in additional to masks, which she feels very strongly about, the other layers of protection we have are diligent hand washing, air quality, and cleaning high touch surfaces. She asked if we are as diligent as we were in the spring. Dr. Bryant noted we are but there is always room to be more diligent. The low case numbers during the summer brought a high level of comfort. We recognize the data is tracking in the wrong direction right now. We can never attend to those things enough and all the practices will be in place in the schools. Mrs. Holt acknowledged during summer learning we did not have the cases we are looking at now even with students attending field trips that did not require masks at those locations. Dr. Revis spoke about the lower number of students in summer learning helped make that possible. Dr. Revis said she feels like she failed the children and the School Board at the last meeting on August 2 because she did not speak up about her thoughts on why masks should be required in schools. She was one of the ones who voted no to masks being optional. She noted she was in public education and started school for 37 years. Every time children come back together at the beginning of the school years, viruses, bugs, and headlice are passed between the children and run rampant. Dr. Revis said she is not saying masks should be in place forever and ever. When we bring these large numbers of children back together, we have to make sure that every layer of protection is there for the children to get use through the first four to six weeks of school. She is not

willing to leave this discussion as wait and see. She said the School Board needs to vote again on the issue of masks in the schools. She acknowledges that she respects everyone's opinion. She is one person and one opinion; however, she has 37 years of experience starting school that says we need to take all precautions necessary as we come back to school. She mentioned the Student Code of Conduct has the rules and standards for every child in the school system when they are at school. In the Student Code of Conduct, the dress code is addressed. The dress code ensures students wear appropriate clothing to school. The Student Code of Conduct is there to maintain a safe and orderly environment for students to come to school.

Ms. Case noted she was the other Board member who voted no to masks being optional in the schools at the August 2 Special Called Meeting. She said masking for safety is an issue we need to face now or we will have to face it down the road. Everyone wants to keep the children safe in the schools. Ms. Case talked about the requirement to wear a mask when she goes in the doctor's office. Ms. Case said she is proud to see the students who are speaking up for what they would like to see in the schools. She talked about a student who had COVID-19 and the after effects she experienced months later. She noted another student who told her parents she would rather wear a mask than to be quarantined from school. Ms. Case said she does not want any child to get COVID-19. She noted her appreciation for the communications the School Board has received from people. She wants to hear from them.

Mrs. Caskey said we need to have an open conversation about special needs cases if we are discussing making masks mandatory in schools. The medical exceptions need to be taken into account when making this discussion.

Mr. Jay Egolf asked what the quarantine guidelines are based on. Dr. Bryant said the HCPHD provided the slides on quarantine guidelines and will confirm with them the source. Mr. Egolf asked if lunch is different than a year ago. Dr. Bryant said students are eating in group settings. We have moved back to more restrictive settings that includes seating charts and other measures have been implemented. Mrs. Holt asked about classroom measurements in elementary schools and if students are back to their learning pods. Dr. Bryant acknowledged that is not the way school started for our two flex schools. However, the data trends show the procedures need to go back to what we were doing in the spring and those measures are being reinstated.

At the August 2 Special Called Meeting, the School Board expressed the desire to add five additional full-time School Nurses in order to have a full-time School Nurse in every school. Dr. Bryant noted that the School Board is committed to the following:

- Commit to the allocation of ESSER funds to provide HCDPH the resources to hire one full-time school nurse for each school campus
- Commitment would be for 5 additional school nurse positions
- Provide this funding through September 2024
- Immediately communicate this commitment to the Henderson County Board of Commissioners and Henderson County leadership

The Henderson County Board of Public Education agreed and directed Dr. Bryant to communicate to Henderson County leadership the commitment to add the five additional full-time School Nurses.

Dr. Bryant mentioned the new virtual learning options that launched last Monday was in response to the board's decision to make face coverings optional. He shared that the virtual Learning Option would look like the following.

Virtual Learning Option (K-8)

- Launched online registration for students in grades K through 8
- In process of hiring staff to provide virtual learning, exclusively
- Requiring families to commit to at least one semester
- Students will be served across the school district
- School day will mirror RLO under Plan C
- May include blended grade levels based on staffing
- Not a hybrid option
- Not available to students under quarantine

Virtual Learning Option (9-12)

- Registering online and then with school counselor (Must have previously demonstrated success in virtual learning)

- Continue to provide online asynchronous courses via
- HCVPS
- NCVPS
- Edmentum
- Require families to commit to a full semester
- Students will be served across the school district
- Not a hybrid option
- Not available to students under quarantine

The window for enrollment was compressed in order to determine the number of staff needed to do a virtual learning option. New staff positions were posted after the August 2 meeting. Families choosing a virtual option for their children had been asked to commit to a full semester by 5 p.m. today, to provide HCPS with accurate enrollment numbers for these new virtual-only classrooms and to be staffed accordingly. As of Monday afternoon, only three staff members had applied to teach virtual-only classrooms, whereas 380 students (136 elementary, 96 middle, 148 high) had chosen a fully virtual option instead of in-person learning. The quarantine support for learning would not be part of the virtual learning option. Students who are quarantined in grades two through 12 would be able to access class work through Google Classroom. Additionally, quarantine support/liaisons at each of the schools would follow up with students who are quarantined to ensure they are getting the support they need during that time period. Ms. Case asked if quarantine period counted to their absences. Dr. Bryant noted that quarantine periods do not count toward absences. Quarantine periods are directed by the Health Department. Students will be able to turn in their work for that time period and the time will not go towards their absences. Mrs. Holt asked if a parent keeps a child out of school because the child is sick, are those days count towards absences. Dr. Bryant clarified excused and unexcused absences. Excused and unexcused absences are not the same as being directed to quarantine by the Health Department. When a parent keeps a child out for an allowable reason such as sickness, it still shows as an absence, but it is noted as excused when the parent relays to the school the reason for the absence. An unexcused absence is when the reason is not allowable. The only place that attendance affects promotion is in our high schools when looking at course credit. Parents need to write notes when a child is out sick in order that the absence can be properly coded. Ms. Case asked about how high school students will be taught on virtual learning. Dr. Frye said it will be a combination of HCVPS, NCVPS, and resources from Edmentum when needed. No additional staff will be hired for high school virtual learning. The cost of this virtual learning is from the cost of the courses selected through HCVPS, NCVPS, and Edmentum. Mr. Craven asked how many candidates there are for the kindergarten through eighth grade. Mr. Rhodes noted we have three candidates for the kindergarten to fifth grade from outside candidates. Only one internal candidate expressed an interest. For middle school, there was no math candidates and few candidates in other core curriculum areas. Kindergarten through third grade has class size caps that need to be taken into consideration. In middle school, a teacher may have to teach a core subject for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade due to licensure and the number of students who signed up for virtual learning. Mr. Craven asked if we would be able to staff kindergarten through eighth grade for virtual learning. Dr. Bryant said we do not currently have the applicant pool to be able to provide the instruction for the number of students who have enrolled in the virtual learning option in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Dr. Revis acknowledges that Mrs. Caskey is correct that we need to have medical waivers for students who cannot wear a mask in school. She said virtual does not seem to be an option due to staffing issues. Mr. Bridges asked when a family can choice between in person and virtual learning. Dr. Bryant noted with each change in conditions a parent can make the choice that is best for their family. Mr. Egolf asked if we go to a mask mandate, would virtual still be offered. Dr. Bryant said it would be the leadership teams recommendation that virtual would not be offered if there is a change in the mask mandate. The School Board has prioritized face to face instruction for every child.

Dr. Bryant noted the following summary:

- Plans will continue to be fluid models and contingent on local health data.
- We will continue to work in close coordination with the Henderson County Department of Public Health and local partner agencies.
- We will respond to questions, concerns, and updated direction from NCDPI, NCDHHS, and other state governing bodies.

- We will continue meeting the instructional obligation to all students every day.

Dr. Revis asked the Board Attorney Chris Campbell how she can make a motion to reconsider the mask optional vote that passed at the August 2 Special Called Meeting. Mr. Campbell noted the School Board has the ability to make decisions in real time. Any motion the Board Chair is willing to accept could be considered. No motion is needed to reconsider the mask optional. Dr. Revis requested the Board Chair to consider a motion to make masks a requirement with the caveat for protocols to be in place for students with a medical exemption from a healthcare provider. Mr. Campbell said the StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit already addresses the medical exemptions. The motion would be to make masks mandatory except for the legal exemptions. Dr. Revis acknowledges that is her motion for students, staff, and visitors in indoor school settings. Ms. Case seconded the motion. Dr. Revis said she would amend to put a timeline on the motion if needed. Mrs. Caskey spoke of how well things were going at the end of last school year. She said the motion should be reviewed as community health changes. Ms. Case said we should revisit when the statics are better. The School Board discussed revisiting at every meeting, as community health changes, or as needed. Mrs. Holt asked about the legal exemptions that are allowed for issues such as severe anxiety. Dr. Bryant noted we will recommunicate the legal exemptions to parents and families. Mr. Craven asked if the mask mandate would apply to indoor sports. He has concerns about indoor athletes playing in a mask. Athletes exerting themselves during the sport should not have to wear a mask during the exertion. Mr. Campbell recommended that issue and visitors to the school to be separate motions. Mr. Bridges said if the School Board agrees to look at the issue at every Board meeting, then he is willing to change his vote for masks to be mandatory. Mr. Egolf said he wanted to get back to normal and voted for masks optional. However, now it seems that we have gone more abnormal at this point. He is concerned with the quarantine education that a student gets and wants to limit the quarantines to ensure a better education for students. Mrs. Holt said other prevention measures need to be in place to help with the spread of COVID-19 and not mandatory masks.

Dr. Revis's motion for mandatory masks for staff and students during the instructional hours and the Board to revisit the issue as needed at each Board meeting. Revis, yes; Caskey, yes; Egolf, yes; Holt, no; Case, yes; Bridges, yes; Craven, yes. Motion passes 6 to 1.

Mr. Craven said that students doing physical activity should not have to wear a mask while indoors. Ms. Case asked if the NC High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) makes that determination. Dr. Bryant acknowledged the NCHSAA leaves the decision regarding masks during sports up to the LEA decision. Mrs. Caskey agrees that participating with sports indoor and wearing a mask is difficult. She asked due to the sports teams such as volleyball having to quarantine even when the numbers were low if there is a compromise to those teams being PCR tested to lessen quarantines. Mr. Craven said that right now the only indoor sport is volleyball and we should not single those athletes out. Mrs. Holt said she thinks if students can go everywhere else other than school with masks off then masks should not be required in the schools. She agrees they should not have to wear masks while playing.

Mr. Craven verified with Mr. Campbell that he can make a motion as the Board Chair. Mr. Craven made the motion to rescind the mask policy indoors for vigorous exercise until further notice. Mr. Egolf seconded the motion. Ms. Case asked that it be revisited as community health changes and as more sports are played indoors. Mr. Craven said he would amend with the motion to just cover volleyball. Bridges, yes; Case, yes; Holt, yes; Egolf, yes; Caskey, yes; Revis, yes; Craven, yes. Motion passes 7 to 0.

Mr. Egolf asked for clarification on sports quarantines. Dr. Bryant said we have quarantines that already exist and quarantines that have affected entire teams. The quarantine guidance of close contacts the same as other quarantines. It's important to note the athletes with the exception of sixth grade students are vaccine eligible. The students who participated in the vaccine efforts are not required to quarantine.

Mr. Craven noted the next issue of visitors in the stands during indoor sports needs to be addressed. Mr. Egolf he is not okay with requiring people in the stands to wear a mask. His concern is the students. Mrs. Holt asked for clarification about the CDC guidance and whether it is recommended for indoors or only in the classrooms. Dr. Bryant noted the CDC guidance is indoors and not specific to just classrooms. Dr. Revis asked what kind of visitors. Mr. Craven said all visitors coming into the school. Mr. Campbell said some school districts have defined it to be schools and some said all school and properties. Dr. Bryant noted where we left it in the spring was masks were required in locations where students were scheduled for attendance.

Mr. Campbell suggested this motion be clarified first then a motion regarding visitors on school campuses. He recommended a clarification to Dr. Revis's original motion that the mask mandate applies to students and staff anywhere indoors any place students are scheduled for instruction. Mr. Egolf made the motion. Mr. Craven

seconded the motion. Revis, yes; Caskey, yes; Egolf, yes; Craven, yes; Holt, no; Case, yes; Bridges, yes. Motion passes 6 to 1.

Mr. Campbell said with the visitor motion you can set the rule that the community is asked to wear a mask for unvaccinated using the honor system or you can make it mandatory for visitors. Dr. Revis asked if it can be the same as the motion for visitors that they wear masks while children are present for instruction. She noted the extracurricular sports are attendance optional. Mr. Craven made the motion that face covering policy would apply to all school facilities during the instructional day when students are scheduled for attendance for visitors, staff, and students. Mr. Egolf seconded the motion. Revis, yes; Caskey, yes; Egolf, yes; Craven, yes; Holt, no; Case, no; Bridges, yes. Motion passes 5 to 2.

Dr. Bryant asked for Board direction on the virtual learning option that was launched when the Board decided to make masks optional. The recommendation is to stop the virtual learning option plan and communicate that those families who have registered. Dr. Bryant noted the high school option already exists; however, it would not be an exclusive virtual space. Mrs. Holt said we should not offer the virtual option. Additionally, she noted that we need to be wise of our tax dollars and asked if the School Board chooses to make face coverings optional that we would not go back to a virtual option at that time. Ms. Case asked if the high school students know that it's different than before. Dr. Wendy Frye said the ones that have taken these courses before would realize the difference between this offering and the virtual learning option from last school year. She shared NCVPS costs \$420 per semester course and \$510 per year long course. The HCVPS costs \$250 per student. Mr. Craven said we should not offer the virtual learning option. Mrs. Holt asked if we should offer virtual optional for students who have a hard time wearing a mask. Dr. Bryant said the hope is that we will have the same level of compliance as we did last school year. It will be our continued effort. The feelings of parents and children will be respected; however, masks are the expectations when at school for instruction. Mr. Campbell said the legal mask exemptions would address the medical reasons but would not address the parents who do not want their child to wear a mask. Mr. Craven noted we do not have the current staff to do virtual learning and that played in to why he voted for masks to be mandatory. Mrs. Holt said if we extended the option to one group then we should extend it to the other group. We need to give parents an option. Dr. Bryant said we can verify who would still want to be in virtual learning and determine the cohort of students who want that from who applied or from a new cohort. Mrs. Holt agreed that we will want to be able to staff it from the looks of the numbers who applied. Dr. Bryant recommended that the virtual learning option be suspended at this time. Mr. Egolf made the motion. Dr. Revis seconded the motion. Bridges, yes; Case, yes; Holt, yes; Craven, yes; Egolf, yes; Caskey, yes; Revis, yes. Motion passes 7 to 0.

B. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Carl Taylor provided the School Board with status updates on the construction and facility projects currently underway or planned in the near future. At Hendersonville High, the inside demolition of the existing buildings scheduled for renovation is ongoing, as is the repointing of the Stillwell building's brick and mortar and final cleaning and floor waxing of the new buildings. The old vault from the Stillwell building was implemented into the new building. The new campus driveway, parking lot and building entrance at Oakland Street is complete. The renovations to secure Rugby Middle's entries are in progress but completion has been delayed from August to September due to unavailability of furniture scheduled to be delivered and installed. In the meantime, the school administrators have identified interim furniture solutions for the space. The renovations to replace the freezer serving HCPS Child Nutrition Services operations are underway and estimated to be completed by late October. The freezer at the warehouse enables Child Nutrition Services to house bigger shipments of food beyond what is delivered to the schools.

C. EQUITY UPDATE

Dr. Wendy Frye updated the Board that two teachers have been hired to grow the Teaching as a Profession course of study in HCPS, which the district is piloting for prospective students who may consider teaching as a career, with the desired intent of diversifying our future workforce. Annah Lord, NBCT, will be teaching the course at East Henderson and Hendersonville high schools. Sam Henry, NBCT, will be teaching the course at North Henderson and West Henderson high schools. The Instructional Services Department is currently working with high school administrators and counselors to market the Teaching as a Profession course of study, to recruit and schedule students in these classes for the fall. Additionally, HCPS is seeking feedback on the district's 2021 summer learning program, and sent out a survey crafted by Hanover Research last week to students, parents, and

staff who participated in the programming. She spoke of the number of high school credits awarded during summer learning: 674 credits, 376 students received those credits, 23 students graduated based on these credits, and 115 students other than the seniors who graduated were promoted based on the credits earned. Dr. Frye told the Board about the upcoming Band/Orchestra Teacher Meeting on August 18th that will be led by Dr. Marcie Wilson. The goal will be to discuss opportunities and ways to ensure equity in the areas of band and orchestra. Dr. Kathy Revis thanked Dr. Frye and her staff for their creativity and efforts in making summer learning fun, exciting, and engaging for the students. She asked that it be passed along to the principals and teachers involved in the summer learning.

D. CHILD CARE UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent, Scott Rhodes, shared the Child Care Update. He stated that the Financial Projections for June/July 2021 are: Revenues: \$78,075.00 and Expenses: \$104,197.84 with the FY Operational Profit/(Loss): -\$26,122.84. Mr. Rhodes noted the Board directed an incentive to compensate employees during Summer PLUS. The extra \$10 per hour was not enough to open another site. However, they were able to increase the number of students served at the one location. The Summer PLUS bonus pay totaled approximately \$37,000, which caused the loss in fiscal year operational profit. The loss was a planned loss that was needed for Summer PLUS. Mr. Rhodes said there will be no board report next month for Child Care because there will only be one week of revenue to report.

E. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the Financial Statements as of June 30, 2021. He presented the following:

1. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of June 30, 2021: Revenues received totaled \$31,436,712 and expenditures made total \$28,405,656. This represents the end of the fiscal year with the any receivables and payables yet to be posted. Covid relief funds and the changes to normal operations lead to transaction of only 89% of the anticipated expenditures between Funds 2 and 8.
2. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2021-22 fiscal year as of July 31, 2021: Revenues received totaled \$3,078,066 and expenditures made totaled \$2,184,385.
3. Results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of June 30, 2021: Revenues received for the year were \$3,426,766, and expenditures for the year totaled \$2,346,842.
4. Results of operations of the Enterprise Fund for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of June 30, 2021:
 - a. Child Nutrition received \$5,750,509 in revenues and had \$6,035,853 in expenditures for the year. This is far better than the anticipated need to use \$650,000 of fund balance due to Covid changes.
 - b. Child Care received \$1,074,171 in revenues and had \$920,593 in expenditures for the year. The relief funds received during the year along with the change to operations prevented the need to use fund balance this year.
 - c. Both programs had very different than normal operations, and revenues were heavily Covid funding related.

Mr. Blair Craven asked about the reimbursements for Child Nutrition. Dr. Bryant said the reimbursements will go through September 2022. He noted they will confirm those dates for universal feeding. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt said we need to communicate to parents that they need to fill out the forms for free and reduced lunch. Parents need to know that funding is based on these numbers as well. The School Board discussed ways to do it more efficiently and ways to incentivize for parents to fill out the form. Dr. Bryant said we need to better educate our community on the ways that information is utilized and we will work hard to better communicate that to people.

F. GENERAL OPERATIONS

Dr. John Bryant noted the following upcoming dates: August 16 - First Day for Students on Early College Calendar, August 23 - First Day for Students on Traditional Calendar, September 6 - Labor Day Holiday for All Students and Staff, September 8 - HCBPE School Tours, 10:00am at West Henderson High, Edneyville Elementary, and Bruce Drysdale Elementary, and September 13 - HCBPE Regular Meeting, 4:00pm, Closed Session, 3:00pm, Boardroom

Dr. Bryant acknowledged that he does not think people have any idea how challenging the job of the School Board is to do. He talked about his respect for the Board and how we are a better school system because they chose to service. He said it is an honor to serve alongside each of the School Board members. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt noted to Dr. Bryant that the school personnel are real MVPs. Mr. Craven said the school personnel are the real heroes. He told Dr. Bryant to keep making us the best school system that you can and he appreciates all the work that is done.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Jay Egolf. *(Unanimously approved at 7:50 pm.)*

Minutes approved: September 13, 2021