

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

April 10, 2023

The Henderson County Board of Public Education held a meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link at, <http://hcpsnc.org/live>.

Board Members Present:

Blair Craven, Chairperson; Jay Egolf, Vice Chairperson; Robert Bridges; Stacey Caskey; Shelia Dale; Alyssa Norman; Kathy Revis;

Administrative Staff Present:

Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent; Shannon Marlowe, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer and Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer

Attorney Present: Chris Campbell

Board Clerk: Tawana Clayton

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Mr. Craven led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Blair Craven acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve. Mrs. Stacey Caskey moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Robert Bridges. (*Unanimously approved.*)

RECOGNITION

Rachel Rodriguez on behalf of Education First High School Exchange Year presented Henderson County Public Schools with a Global Education Excellence Award. HCPS was one of the first school district's in our region to bring cultural exchange opportunities back post-COVID, a true testament to how much HCPS values our students understanding other cultures and gaining 21st century skills. HCPS has gone above and beyond in welcoming their global classmates into academics, sports, and school culture. In this upcoming school year, 3/4 traditional HCPS high schools will host at least one EF exchange student (with the possibility of 4/4 soon). Mr. Taylor has provided seamless communication between EF, school principals, and other stakeholders to make sure that Henderson County students have access to this fun & important facet of global education and global diplomacy.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT – Student Mental Health and School Safety

Scott Massington Director of School Safety and Matt Grubmeyer Director of Student Services presented to the board information on school safety and mental health. Mr. Scott Massington discussed school safety and defined it as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying and harassment, and the influence of substance use. Safe schools promote the protection of all students from violence, exposure to weapons and threats, theft, bullying and harassment, the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds, and other emergencies. School safety is linked to improved student and school outcomes. HCPS defines safety as, relationships with community partners, effective use of technology, continuously evaluating new safety protocol opportunities and Educating and training our Staff and Students. Mr. Matt Grubmeyer spoke on the importance of mental health. According to a 2022 report from the National Institutes

of Health (NIH), “nearly 20% of children and young people ages 3-17 in the United States have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder, and suicidal behaviors among high school students increased more than 40% in the decade before 2019. Mental health challenges were the leading cause of death and disability in this age group. These trends were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.” Mr. Grubmeyer discussed the common risk factors for a child or youth developing mental illness or substance use disorders and protective factors for certain mental health challenges. HCPS Student Services department is equipped with specialists, 18 school based social workers, 35 school counselors and 24 school nurses. With additional support from selected community partners, school safety and student support plans and professional development.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT – Pathways for Disconnected Youth Taskforce Report

Rebecca McCall, Board of Commissioners Chair, presented to the board the pathways for disconnected youth taskforce report. Disconnected youth is defined as those who are age 16-19, not in school and not working. The mission is to identify strategies for counties to help youth chart pathways to leading productive, healthy and happy lives in adulthood. The determination is to provide every middle and high school age student the opportunity to participate in afterschool programs. Ms. McCall’s recommendation is to provide transportation for students who are unable to participate in afterschool activities because they do not have a ride home. The purchase of 5 minivans to share among 9 schools then establish a mentoring program.

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven has no observations at this time.

BOARD MEMBERS’ OBSERVATION

Mrs. Sheila Dale mentioned the phenomenal experience and leadership shown from students during a tour at Clear Creek Elementary.

PUBLIC COMMENT

At 5:44 p.m. Mr. Craven opened the meeting for public comment. Two people addressed the Board. Public comments ended at 5:51 p.m. No action was taken.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Blair Craven cited the Board’s receipt of the Consent Agenda presented for approval upon recommendation of the Superintendent. Prior to the meeting, Board members received documentation relative to the Consent Agenda as follows:

- A. Meeting Schedule
 - 1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [*Monday, May 8, 2023, 4:00 p.m., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm) (Boardroom)*]
- B. Minutes
 - 1. March 6, 2023 (*Regular Business Meeting*)
- C. Personnel (*as presented in closed session*)
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases (*as presented in closed session*)
- E. Budget Amendment

Mr. Robert Bridges moved that the Consent Agenda be approved. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. (Unanimously approved.)

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Teacher Recruitment Signing Bonuses – (*Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources*)

Mr. Rhodes presented the board with the information requested regarding the number of new full-time teacher positions filled from August 25, 2022 until present. No action was taken.

B. Policy Updates – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*

Approval – Policy 6220 – Operation of School Nutrition Services

Policy 6220 was not approved at the March 6, 2023 board meeting due to the language in the policy.

Attorney Chris Campbell discussed the reasons for the language in the policy. The North Carolina School Board Association included examples of discrimination in policy 6220 update. Attorney Campbell explained the language is an example and not the definition. The language is not a requirement by the federal government. The reason to include the language would be to provide notice to administrators and others in the district that these could be forms of possible discrimination. Attorney Campbell's recommendation is to keep the language including any conclusive definition due to the evolving nature of the particular issues and adding at the end of the parenthetical phrase “as determined by existing law.” Attorney Campbell stated making changes to any North Carolina School Board Association policies is not recommended. The board discussed the language in the policy. Mrs. Stacey Caskey recognized the importance of having the language in the policy.

Dr. Kathy Revis moved to not add the parenthetical clarifying identifiers in policy 6220, paragraph A1. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. Dr. Kathy Revis withdrew the previous motion and moved that the policy be amended without the inclusion of the parenthetical in paragraph A1. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mrs. Norman-Yes; Mr. Bridges-No; Mr. Egolf-Yes; Mrs. Caskey-No; Dr. Revis-Yes; Mrs. Dale-Yes; Mr. Craven-No *(Passes 4 to 3)*

Approval – Policy 2200 – Election of Officers/Organization of Board

The board requested to review policy 2200, specifically the language stating serving four consecutive one-year terms as chairperson. After serving four consecutive terms at chairperson the member is not eligible to serve as chairperson for a period of two years. The board discussed the policy language and why it was included in the policy. Mrs. Stacey Caskey moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve Policy 200-Election of Officers/Organization of Board as presented, removing the language that limits the number of consecutive terms a board member may serve as chairperson. No second. *(Motion fails)*.

Approval – Policy 3220 – Technology in the Educational Program

Policy 3220 was not approved at the March 6, 2023 board meeting due to the language in the second paragraph. Attorney Campbell provided information regarding the language, stating it's in the NC Digital Teaching and Learning standards that are recommended by the State Board of Education in North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and not a legal requirement. The board discussed the language in the policy.

Mr. Blair Craven moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve Policy 3220 – Technology in the Educational Program as presented. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mrs. Norman-Yes; Mr. Bridges-Yes; Mr. Egolf-Yes; Mrs. Caskey-Yes; Dr. Revis-Yes; Mrs. Dale-No; Mr. Craven-Yes. *(Passes 6 to 1)*

C. Berkeley Property Acquisition Update – *(Mr. Mark Garrett, Superintendent)*

Superintendent Mark Garrett discussed with the board details of Berkeley property acquisition. The county commissioners agree to not accept the property or move on the surplus property. HCPS is able to complete the Berkeley acquisition with the city of Hendersonville. Attorney Chris Campbell gave an overview of the property transaction thus far. The board voted to authorize Chairman Blair Craven and

Superintendent Mark Garrett to close on the additional 21.34 acres at Berkeley Park. Mr. Robert Bridges moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education authorize closing on the additional 21.34 acres at Berkeley Park. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion – Bill 219, Charter School Omnibus – *(Board Members)*

The board discussed adopting a resolution opposing House Bill 219, Charter School Omnibus. This bill states public schools would have to share a percentage of funding and/or grants with the charter school without being reciprocated. Mr. Jay Egolf moved to adopt the resolution opposing House Bill 219, Charter School Omnibus. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

B. Approval – Audit Contract for 2022-2023 Fiscal Year – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Berni Sochia presented the audit contract for fiscal year 2022-2023. In accordance with Board Policy #505, “Selection and Retention of Auditor”, the contract for the HCPS audit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023 is presented for approval. The State Treasurer’s recommendations for the selection of the auditor include the following criteria: a.) an understanding of the governmental unit’s needs, b.) the approach and methodology, c.) qualifications in governmental auditing, d.) the experience of the audit firm, and e.) the cost of the audit. The history of Carland and Andersen’s service as auditor for Henderson County Public Schools has been invaluable, and the continuity provided by Carland and Andersen is essential. They continue to assist the Finance Department and the individual school bookkeepers on an ad hoc basis, with no additional fees. As to the issue of qualifications and experience, Carland and Andersen currently serves as the auditor for the following governmental/nonprofit entities: School Boards:

Transylvania County Schools and Madison County Schools

Towns/Municipalities: Rosman, Tryon and Columbus

ABC Boards: Hendersonville, Laurel Park, Brevard, Columbus, Highlands and Tryon

Foundations: Henderson County Education Foundation

In North Carolina, accounting firms performing audits are required to have a peer review every three years. Carland and Andersen’s last peer review was submitted in January 2022 by the Raleigh firm of Batchelor, Tillery & Roberts, LLP. Carland and Andersen received a peer review rating of pass (firms can receive a rating of pass, pass with deficiency(ies), or fail). Although not the primary basis for the recommendation that they be awarded the contract, Carland and Andersen has continued to have a very reasonable and low fee at \$31,500 to conduct the audit and write the financial statements.

Mr. Robert Bridges moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the “Contract to Audit Accounts” between the Henderson County Board of Public Education and Carland and Andersen, Inc. for the period beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded. *(Unanimously approved)*

C. Discussion – Legislative Budget Items – *(Board Members)*

Mr. Blair Craven postponed this discussion item until the board workshop being held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

D. Approval – Cafeteria Manager Bonus – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Robert Rolfe Director of Child Nutrition and Mr. Bernie Sochia Chief Finance Officer presented to the board a need for a cafeteria manager bonus. The request is an end of year bonus of \$2,500 out of fund balance. Prior to the base pay increase of \$13 and then \$15/hour, Child Nutrition managers hourly

pay rate was between 14-20% higher than Child Nutrition assistants. After the minimum pay increase was put in effect, that difference dropped below 10%.

Mr. Blair Craven moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve a one-time bonus of \$2,500 to each Child Nutrition Manager in fiscal year 2022-23. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

E. Approval – NC Education Lottery Application – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the Public School Building Capital Fund/N.C. Education Lottery Application to request funds currently available (\$234,135.09) to pay debt service on the 2008 Installment Financing Contract debt issue for the Hillandale and Mills River Elementary School construction projects. All funds received from the N. C. Education Lottery funds are currently being used for debt service on these school building projects.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Public School Building Capital Fund/North Carolina Education Lottery Application. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. CAPITAL UPDATE – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*

Mr. Carl Taylor presented the Board with status updates on the capital projects construction and facility projects currently underway or planned in the near future. North Henderson Baseball & Softball Lights- Currently in phase power with Duke Energy with an estimated completion date of April 202. The 2022-2023 MRTS funds projects included security cameras. All cameras and infrastructure installed at the middle and high schools. All cameras have been installed at Bruce Drysdale, Edneyville, Etowah, and Hendersonville Elementary. The remaining elementary schools are being prepped for installation. Upward Elementary Cafeteria Renovation and Secure Entry, CMR Pre-Proposal Meeting-March 8, 2023, CMR Proposals Due-March 15, 2023, CMR Selection- to be determined. West Henderson renovation and addition is in the pre-construction phase. A meeting with LS3P and Carolina Specialties was held on March 7, 2023. Pre-construction pricing for schematic designs is scheduled for May 2023. No action was taken.

B. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the Financial Statements. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and other Restricted Funds for the 2022-23 fiscal year as of March 31, 2023: Revenues received total \$29,761,586 expenditures made a total of \$23,207,988. There is one more month of County appropriation to receive for the fiscal year. Results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2022-23 fiscal year as of March 31, 2023: Revenues received total \$1,756,253 and expenditures made total \$1,011,243. Of the remaining funds, \$995,815 are encumbered for ongoing projects and purchases. No action was taken.

C. GENERAL OPERATIONS – *(Mr. Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent)*

April: School Library Month; April 12: HCBPE Budget Workshop, 9:00-12:00 p.m., Boardroom; April 19: HCBPE Budget Workshop (if needed), 9:00-11:00 a.m., Boardroom; April 20: NC Scholars' Reception, 11:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., BRCC in Technology Education & Development Center; April 25: 2023 Henderson County Education Foundation Education Celebration, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m., Jeter Mountain Farm; May 1: School Principal's Day & Substitute Appreciation Day; May 5: School Lunch Hero Day; May 3: HCBPE School Tours, 10:00 a.m. at Upward Elementary, Fletcher Elementary, and Mills River Elementary; May 8-12: Teacher Appreciation Week; May 26: Henderson County Early College Graduation, 6:00 p.m.; June 9:

Henderson County High School Graduations:

- Henderson County Career Academy, 5:30 p.m.
- Hendersonville High School, 6:00 p.m.

- North Henderson High School, 6:00 p.m.
- East Henderson High School, 7:00 p.m.
- West Henderson High School, 7:30 p.m.

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Dr. Kathy Revis moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved at 7:32pm.*)

Minutes approved: May 8, 2023