

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

March 8, 2021

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 8, 2021, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the March 8, 2021 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. Therefore, limited members of the public were allowed into the meeting room. The Board received public comment via email prior to the meeting. 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 March 9, 2021. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link at, <http://tiny.cc/HCPSlive>.

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; Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer and Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer.

Attorney Present: Mrs. Cynthia Lopez

Board Clerk: Mrs. Kathy R. Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10pm and led all 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. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the agenda be approved as presented. Seconded by Mr. Robert Bridges. *(Unanimously approved.)*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Information on the recent HCPS employees' Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic was presented by Mr. Scott Rhodes, Mr. Carl Taylor and Mrs. Molly McGowan Gorsuch. Community partners, Pardee UNC Health Care and Blue Ridge Health committed over 1200 doses of the vaccine for distribution to Henderson County educators and support staff.

Mr. Scott Rhodes shared the pre-planning timeline for staff vaccinations: Early January - Received guidance from local health care providers on how to plan for vaccination effort; Late January - Collected information from HCPS employees in order to be prepared for when educators became eligible to receive the vaccine; Late January – persons over the age of 65 and EC staff were vaccinated through the Health Department and Pardee. Mr. Taylor stated that on February 10 - Governor Cooper announced our group's eligibility to receive the vaccine beginning February 24. Early February communications with Pardee Health Care and Blue Ridge Health allowed Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Carl Taylor to establish the timeline and expectations for the vaccination clinics. Molly McGowan Gorsuch shared the communications timeline. On February 19, an internal email was sent to staff confirming clinic dates, scheduling information and what to expect. On February 26, #SleevesUp4Schools was underway! Over 1200 HCPS employees received the Covid-19 vaccination. Staff members who missed the February clinics for various reasons are being rescheduled via our healthcare partners.

This vaccination effort should enable the school system to return to face to face instruction at a quicker pace, dependent on Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Orders. HCPS extends its heartfelt gratitude to Pardee UNC Health Care and Blue Ridge Health for securing the vaccines given to HCPS educators and support staff

Board members shared their gratitude for how well the vaccination clinic was executed and shared kudos for Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Taylor and Mrs. McGowan Gorsuch and their tireless planning efforts.

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven congratulated the men's basketball team from Hendersonville High School for an undefeated season and for making it to the finals in the state competition. Mr. Craven said the team played their hearts out and displayed sportsmanship throughout the final game. Congratulations to head coach, Mr. Marvin Featherstone, for a wonderful season.

Mr. Craven congratulated Mrs. Genee Dalton, first grade teacher at Edneyville Elementary School, for her recognition as a North Carolina School Hero. The North Carolina Education Lottery created the NC School Heroes program to celebrate the heroic work of teachers, principals, and school workers who help students achieve their dreams. We're proud to honor Genee Dalton from Edneyville Elementary, a hero that goes above and beyond!

BOARD OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Dot Case recognized Dr. Wendy Frye for her designation as the 2020-2021 NCACTE-A CTE Administrator of the Year. The North Carolina Association for Career and Technical Education Administrative Division (NCACTE-A) announced Dr. Wendy Frye, Director of High Schools and Career and Technical Education for Henderson County Public Schools in Hendersonville, North Carolina, as the 2020-2021 NCACTE-A CTE Administrator of the Year. This award recognizes administrative career and technical education (CTE) professionals at the school, district, county, or state level in the 115 public school systems in North Carolina. The nominees must have demonstrated outstanding leadership in ensuring teacher and student success and have made significant contributions toward innovative, unique and effective CTE programs. Dr. Frye has recently brought over \$650,000 in grant funds to HCPS in support of drone technology, agriscience, skilled trades, coding, mechatronics as well as increased resources to middle school career development. Additionally, she has worked closely with Blue Ridge Community College, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, and the Hendersonville Chamber of Commerce to increase apprenticeship opportunities for students. Dr. Frye has also provided statewide professional development in Honors Portfolio Development and Differentiation for the CTE Classroom. While working as a regional coordinator for NCDPI, she oversaw the CTE Administrative Internship program for new CTE directors across the state.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt stated that the Board of Education is not responsible for middle and high school students not returning to school on Plan A. She said there is confusion that the Board is not in favor of middle and high school students returning at their maximum capacity. Per the Governor Roy Cooper's latest Executive Order, middle and high school students can only attend on Plan B and are required to maintain six feet social distancing while in school. Mrs. Holt added that our classrooms are not designed to accommodate this distancing requirement at the middle and high school levels. She affirmed; it is our desire to have all of our students back in classrooms full-time before the end of this year.

Mr. Robert Bridges thanked Dr. Bryant for scheduling school tours for board members this year. Mr. Bridges enjoyed his March visit to Dana Elementary School and said it was such a pleasure to see the enthusiasm for being back on campus from students and teachers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Blair Craven stated that 9 pre-submitted public comments were received for the March 8, 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 on Tuesday, March 9, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Blair Craven called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

A. Meeting Schedule

1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting *[Monday, April 12, 2021, 4:00 p m., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm.) (Boardroom)]*
2. HCBPE Budget Workshop *[Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 12:00-2:00pm (Boardroom)]*
3. HCBPE Budget Workshop *[Thursday, April 29, 2021, 12:00-2:00pm (Boardroom)]*

- B. Minutes – February 8, 2021 (*Regular Business Meeting*)
- C. Personnel (*as presented in closed session*)
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases (*as presented in closed session*)
- E. Budget Amendment
- F. Resolution – Public School Volunteers Week
- G. Resolution – "We Are Hope" Week
- H. Resolution – National Social Work Month
- I. Resolution – Arts in Our Schools Month

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented in Closed Session. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*) Board members read the resolutions aloud for the record. Ms. Dot Case commented that the addition of more school social workers could not have come at a better time and she acknowledged the Arts are such an important part of our system.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Approval – (2021-2022) Traditional Schedule Calendar – (*Second Reading*) (*Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer*)

Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, presented the 2021-2022 Traditional Calendar for final approval. Mr. Taylor explained there had been no revisions to the 2021-2022 Traditional Calendar since it was presented and tabled for second reading at the February 8, 2021 board meeting.

Mr. Craven explained that under North Carolina calendar law we are required to approve a school calendar before April 1 annually. Mr. Craven stated the Board of Education is in favor of starting a week earlier if that option becomes available for 2021-2022 school year.

Dr. Kathy Revis made a motion to approve the (2021-2022) Traditional Schedule Calendar as presented for second reading and final approval. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval – Reassignment Tuition – (*Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer*)

Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, presented a recommendation to increase the out of county reassignment tuition for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Taylor stated that out of county tuition is based on Henderson County's Local Current Expense per student. The HCPS Average Daily Membership for 2020-2021 is 13,463. Using this ADM, Mr. Taylor recommended that the tuition fee should be increased by \$150.00 per student for the 2021-2022 school year (from \$2000 to \$2150 per out of county student.)

Mr. Blair Craven made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the increase of out of county tuition to \$2,150.00 for the 2021–2022 school year. Mr. Robert Bridges seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

- B. Approval – 2019-2020 Audit Report – (*Carland and Andersen, P.A.*) (*Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer*)

Mr. Terry Andersen from Carland and Anderson, P.A. presented the results from the 2019-2020 Audit Report. The attached financial statements, which include the Independent Auditors' Report (required by the Local Government Commission for all LEAs), present the results of operations and financial position of the Henderson County Board of Public Education as of June 30, 2020, and for the fiscal year then ended. The audit report contains an unmodified opinion on the Board's financial statements, and there were no questioned costs or reportable conditions. Dr. John Bryant thanked Mr. Andersen for his presentation and stated that he is grateful for their tremendous partnership with Henderson County Schools.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion that that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the financial statements and Independent Auditors' Report as of June 30, 2020 and for the fiscal year then ended. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

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 March 6, the rolling average in Henderson County was 25/100,000 people. Henderson County is in the Significant/Yellow tier on the NC DHHS County Alert System Report.

Dr. Bryant stated that the District Dashboard is still active. New school-affected cases are reported the business day after the positive case is confirmed, with updates at 9 a.m. Any school-affected clusters will be reported to the NCDHHS by the local health department and updated on the NCDHHS dashboard. HCPS will send cluster notifications to staff and families of all schools and to the community through all available communication channels.

Dr. John Bryant shared that Groups 1 and 2 along with educators are eligible to receive vaccinations at this time. Frontline essential workers are in Group 3 and will be eligible for vaccination beginning March 10, 2021. Over 1200 HCPS employees requested and were given the vaccine through the vaccination clinics in February. Dr. Bryant stated that we are no longer tracking staff absences since our workforce numbers have stabilized over the past few weeks.

Dr. Bryant said the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) was revised on March 4, 2021. The new guidance is summarized below:

- Kindergarten – 5th Grade Students: Schools should return to in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible up to five days per week while following all public health protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit. Schools must provide in-person learning to students in grades K-5 under the social distancing requirements for either Plan A (Minimal Social Distancing) or Plan B (Six Feet Social Distancing).
- 6th – 12th Grade Students: Schools should return to in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible up to five days per week while following all protocols in the StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit, including the Six Feet Social Distancing Requirements detailed on page 8 (Plan B). The requirements for Six Feet Social Distancing provide an additional layer of protection in middle and high school settings, recognizing that studies indicate that younger children appear to be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others than older teens and adults.
- Remote Learning Option: Schools must create a process for students and/or their families, teachers, and staff to self-identify as high-risk from COVID-19 and have a plan in place to address requests for alternative learning arrangements or work reassignments. Schools must implement remote or other learning options for students whose families decide the student needs to remain at home because the student and/or their family member(s) are at high-risk from COVID-19. All other students must be offered in-person instruction as outlined above (Plan A or B for K – 5th grade students and Plan B for 6th – 12th grade students.)

Dr. Bryant stated the most notable revision to the Toolkit is that the fully remote option, Plan C, is no longer available for school systems. Remote learning will be offered for at-risk students and upon parent request but entire school systems can no longer operate under Plan C.

Dr. Bryant made the following Return to Learn recommendation:

- Continue Plan A for all elementary students [K-G5] for the remainder of the school year
- Continue Plan B for all middle/high students [G6 - G12] until Plan A is an option

Dr. Bryant said that additional legislation to fully reopen schools for face to face instruction is being considered in Raleigh. He will notify board members if new legislation is presented. Mr. Craven stated that he would not hesitate to call another Board meeting if Plan A becomes a possibility for grades 6-12 in Henderson County Schools. Dr. Bryant stated that we are currently planning for a return to Plan A for all students when viable. Dr. Bryant added that we will continue to monitor community health trends and workforce stability, while providing continued district communications to keep parents and families informed. Dr. Bryant reiterated that all Return to Learn plans continue to be fluid models and are contingent on local health data and that we will continue to respond to questions, concerns, and updated direction from NCDPI, NCDHHS, and other state governing bodies. Dr. Bryant stated, we will continue meeting the instructional obligation to all students every day.

B. NAMING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES (*Policy Code: 9300 Naming Facilities*)

Superintendent John M. Bryant shared information on School Board Policy 9300, *Naming Facilities*. Policy 9300 - Naming Facilities states that *“The board considers naming facilities to be a significant endeavor since the name of a facility can reflect upon the students, staff, school system, and community.”* Further, among the number of factors the board may consider is the *“honor or memory of an individual who has helped students in this school system succeed through financial contributions or educational leadership.”*

The ongoing construction at Hendersonville High School is a physical representation of such contribution. Cam Boyd and the entire Boyd family were integral in the possible vision for the future of the Hendersonville High School campus footprint. The sale of the family property in 2011, formerly the home of Boyd Automotive, and the subsequent gift back to the County laid the groundwork for the construction and renovation taking place today. Superintendent Bryant recommended naming the new building for Cam Boyd and his family, since the sale of the Boyd family property in 2011 and their subsequent gift back to the County laid the groundwork for the renovation of HHS taking place today.

Mr. Craven expressed his agreement with the recommendation. Board members concurred and agreed this would be a good precedent for the school system.

Mr. Robert Bridges made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the naming of the newly constructed building on the campus of Hendersonville High School in honor of the Boyd family. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

Mr. Craven stated that he would like the Board to consider a revision to Policy 9300, item number 3, which reads, “3. *The name may be in honor or memory of an individual who has helped students in this school system succeed through financial contributions or educational leadership; however, it is not the practice of the board to name a facility for a living person.*” Mr. Craven suggested removing ‘*however, it is not the practice of the board to name a facility for a living person,*’ from the policy because it is a limitation that shouldn’t exist. Board members agreed with his recommendation. Mr. Craven made a motion to revise Policy 9300, item number 3, deleting ‘*however, it is not the practice of the board to name a facility for a living person,*’ from the policy. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*) Chief Administrative Officer, Carl Taylor, will handle the update with the School Board Association.

C. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, stated that the Board of Education will be touring the new Hendersonville High School facility in March. There will be 2-3 tour times available for Board members to attend. Mr. Taylor presented an update on the Hendersonville High School construction project. Mr. Taylor stated that the first furniture order has been placed and he shared renderings of how the furniture will be placed within the classrooms. He also shared pictures of the auxiliary gym and the new locker rooms under construction. He stated the pedestrian bridge between the Stillwell building and Area A of the new building is underway.

Mr. Taylor said that the construction project to secure the entryway at Rugby Middle School has been assigned to the following renovation team:

- Architecture - Mark Lusk Architecture Pllc
- General Contractor - H&M Constructors
- Electrical Contractor - Jackson Electrical LTC

The renovation will relocate a portion of the administration office to the front of the of the school in the existing Art Classroom and relocate the Art Classroom into the existing administrative space. The existing nurse's office will be converted into a reception office and includes relocating the visitor entrance at the new reception office.

Mr. Taylor shared that 62 existing water fountains have been modified with water bottle filler stations across the county. Three filler stations have been installed at each elementary school, four filler stations at each middle school and four filler stations at each of the high schools.

D. EQUITY UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Wendy Frye, stated over the last twelve months we have been providing an Equity Update at each BOE meeting, highlighting professional learning opportunities, teacher recruitment, and curriculum frameworks. Dr. Frye stated that it was her pleasure to share one of the examples of continuing education for one of our exemplary middle school math teachers, Mrs. Katy Gash. Mrs. Gash was selected to participate in a program funded by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF). The SEED Fellows program, as it’s called, stands for “Stem Educators for Equity and Diversity.” This program includes NC STEM educators, primarily in the content areas of science and math. It’s a one-year commitment where the SEED Fellows convene twice a month in the evenings via ZOOM to participate in webinars, panel discussions, guest speaker presentations, and education-centered book studies, all focused on the topic of Race and Equity, especially as it relates to instructional practices as STEM teachers. Our next steps are for Mrs. Gash, and our other teachers and

administrators who are participating in Equity and Diversity training, to share their expertise with staff across our district during professional development days as well as our beginning teacher support program.

E. CHILD CARE SERVICES UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent, Scott Rhodes, shared the Child Care Update. The financial projections for February 2021 were: Revenues, \$67,815.00; Expenses, \$60,978.26; and the FY Operational Profit/(Loss) was \$6,836.74. He stated that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to manage the HCPS Child Care Program is currently posted on the HCPS website, there have been no responses to date. The updated Child Care payment structure, pay by the week, presented at the February 8 meeting went into effect on March 1, 2021.

F. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer, presented the following Financial Report for the Board. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of February 28, 2021: Revenues received total \$24,321,984 and expenditures made total \$17,267,933. Expenditure totals are at 56% of the projected revenue for the year. Prioritizing State dollars has brought this down from 61% at the end of February last year.

G. GENERAL OPERATIONS

Superintendent John M. Bryant mentioned that Kindergarten registration will take place March 23-25 and Spring break is scheduled for April 5-9. Dr. Bryant said the Board of Education will tour the new Hendersonville High School construction site on March 16, 2021.

Dr. Bryant stated it is his honor to serve as the Superintendent of Henderson County Schools.

H. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Stacey Caskey. *(Unanimously approved at 6:07pm.)*

Minutes approved: April 12, 2021