

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

April 12, 2021

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the April 12, 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 50 persons. Therefore, limited members of the public were allowed into the meeting room. 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 April 13, 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; 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: Chris Campbell

Board Clerk: Mrs. Kathy R. Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at approximately 4:01pm 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. Jay Egolf. (*Unanimously approved.*)

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Carl Taylor joined Superintendent John Bryant in recognizing representatives from our community partners, UNC Pardee Health Care and Blue Ridge Health. These community partners were instrumental in providing access to the Covid-19 vaccination for all employees of Henderson County Public Schools in February of 2021. Amy Treece, Community and Government Relations Officer, and Dwayne “Doc” Durham, Director of Pardee Sports Medicine, represented Pardee UNC Healthcare and Tammy Greenwell, Chief Operations Officer, represented Blue Ridge Health for the presentation. Mr. Blair Craven thanked our community partners and stated our students would not be back in schools without their support. Doc Durham replied that it was a great honor and a great day for our school system to be able to provide the vaccinations. Mr. Durham said, “we are winning this war one stick at a time.” Ms. Greenwell acknowledged Mr. Carl Taylor and thanked the school system for allowing Blue Ridge Health to use three of our schools as vaccination sites. She is thankful for the partnership between our organizations.

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven stated it’s great to have the majority of our kids back in schools and thrilled to have some regular school activities underway.

BOARD MEMBER OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Robert Bridges thanked Mr. Carl Taylor for scheduling the tours at Hendersonville High School. He was

impressed with the Hendersonville High School project and enjoyed seeing the smiling faces during the Rugby Middle School tour.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt enjoyed the tour of Hendersonville High School and seeing the use of technology upgrades. She referenced Vannoy and the County of Henderson as being great partners to work with on these projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Blair Craven stated that one pre-submitted public comment was received for the April 12, 2021 meeting. The email was 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, April 13, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Meeting Schedule
 - 1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting and Public Hearing on the 2021-22 Budget
[Monday, May 10, 2021, 4:00 pm., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm.) (Boardroom)]
- B. Minutes
 - 1. March 8, 2021 *(Regular Business Meeting)*
 - 2. March 12, 2021 *(Special Called Meeting)*
- C. Personnel *(as presented in closed session)*
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases *(as presented in closed session)*
- E. Budget Amendment
- F. Resolution – Teacher Appreciation Week
- G. Resolution – School Library Month

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 as presented in Closed Session. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved.)* Board members read the resolutions aloud for the record.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval – Summer School Plan

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Dr. Wendy Frye, stated the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction requires local school districts to report a Board approved plan for administering summer school. Dr. Frye presented the annual Summer School Plan for approval. Mr. Blair Craven inquired how the summer school plan would affect the year round students. Dr. Frye replied the year round students would have a reduced schedule with their earlier summer school start date than the traditional school calendar. Dr. Frye shared we won't have final number of students enrolled in summer school until mid-May. We are actively recruiting our teacher for summer instruction.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the 2020-2021 Summer Program Plan as presented. Ms. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. *(Unanimously Approved.)*

B. Approval – Sole Source Vendor

Dr. Wendy Frye presented a sole source vendor request for approval. She stated The Office of Budget and Management (OMB) issues Uniform Guidance (UG) Procurement Standards for local governments. All purchases of goods and services that exceed \$10,000 require issuing a bid solicitation using the UG "micro-purchase" procedures. One exception to these guidelines is for "procurement by noncompetitive proposals" which means that the item is only available from a single source provider. Procurement under this exception requires Board approval. We are requesting Board approval for Wilson Language to be a sole source vendor on behalf of Immaculata Private School. Immaculata partners with us to receive Title I services and we serve as the fiscal agent for purchases to support their instructional program funded through Title I. They are looking to implement Wilson Language Foundations phonics program, as well as the book collection that supports the program. The total cost, which will be paid from funds allocated for use in the Immaculata program, totals just under \$18,000. We have

requested and received NCDPI's approval and are prepared to purchase, pending your approval. Board members inquired why we were making this request on behalf of Immaculate. Dr. Frye replied that we are their fiscal agent and we are required to act as such by federal law. Mr. Chris Campbell shared that the school system is the pass through agent for the federal funds to ensure equitable services for private schools.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve Wilson Language as a vendor under the sole source exemption guidelines as presented. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. *(Unanimously Approved.)*

C. Approval – 2021-2022 Audit Contract

Chief Finance Officer, Bernie Sochia, presented the 2021-2022 Audit Contract with Carland and Andersen for board approval. Mr. Sochia states in accordance with Board Policy #505, "Selection and Retention of Auditor", the contract for the HCPS audit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021 is presented for approval. He followed 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. Mr. Sochia stated 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. Ms. Dot Case made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the 2021-2022 Audit Contract with Carland and Anderson as presented. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. *(Unanimously Approved.)*

D. Approval – NC Lottery Application

Chief Finance Officer, Bernie Sochia, presented the NC Lottery Application for approval. The Public School Building Capital Fund/N. C. Education Lottery Application is to request funds currently available (\$338,137.09) to pay debt service on the 2008 Installment Financing Contract debt issue for the Hillandale and Mills River Elementary School construction projects. Mr. Sochia stated all funds received from the N. C. Education Lottery are currently being used for debt service on these school building projects. After the presentation, Mr. Blair Craven asked Mr. Sochia to provide the balance due on this debt service at the next School Board meeting. Mr. Jay Egolf made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the NC Lottery Application as presented. Mrs. Stacey Caskey seconded the motion. *(Unanimously Approved.)*

E. Approval – COVID Reserve Funds

Superintendent John Bryant explained the 2020-2021 Local Current Expense budget included \$400,000 in undesignated funds reserved for school system needs and priorities as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. To date the Board of Public Education has assigned an \$85,000 reserve to offset the projected costs of officials for middle and high school athletic contests. Given the present capacity restrictions under the current Executive Order, end-of-year activities [award/honor programs, student recognitions, and graduation ceremonies) require additional logistical/material support. The Board was asked to consider reserving \$73,000 for school level reimbursements specific to end-of-year activities costs. The recommended allocation reserves are: High Schools (4) - \$7,500/each HCCA/HCEC - \$5,000 Middle Schools (4) - \$3,000/each Elementary Schools (13) - \$2,000/each. Dr. Bryant feels that funding these reimbursements will help create equity across the school system. Mr. Blair Craven mentioned that we need to give the students as much of a normal end of year experience as possible. The proposed end of year activity reimbursements would not include athletics.

Also, the Board was asked to consider reserving \$125,000 for projected equipment, infrastructure, and physical renovations to the Board meeting room at the Central Office. Dr. Bryant stated that the COVID era has demonstrated the need for significant investment in the infrastructure and equipment to support the current and future uses of the Boardroom space. Technological upgrades, in addition to physical renovations, would enable greater public engagement (virtually/in person) and districtwide professional use of the Boardroom space. If the \$125,000 is approved, \$117,000 of the COVID19 Reserve Funds would still remain undesignated for future Board considerations. Mr. Jay Egolf stated the public should know that the School Board is looking at multiple funding sources and are pre-planning for the 2021-2022 school budget to ensure the best use of all available funds.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey made a motion that the that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the allocation of the COVID Reserve Funds as presented. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. *(Unanimously Approved.)*

BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

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 April 10, 2021 the rolling average in Henderson County was 14.5/100,000 people. Henderson County is in the Moderate/Light Yellow tier on the NC DHHS County Alert System Report.

Dr. Bryant stated that Senate Bill 220, *The Reopen Our Schools Act of 2021*, was passed on March 11, 2021. He presented the highlights for the board:

- Grades kindergarten through five. – Local boards of education shall provide in-person instruction under Plan A (Minimal Social Distancing) to all students enrolled in grades kindergarten through five.
- Grades six through 12. – 1. Local boards of education shall provide in-person instruction under either Plan A (Minimal Social Distancing), Plan B (Six Feet Social Distancing), or both, to all students enrolled in grades six through 12. The decision of which Plan to offer is solely within the discretion of the local board of education, except that a local board shall provide the option to participate in Plan A instruction, at the discretion of the student's parent or guardian, for the following students enrolled in that unit:
 1. Any student with an individualized education program, as defined in G.S. 115C 106.3(8)
 2. Any student with a section 504 (29 U.S.C. § 794) plan
- Grades kindergarten through 12 remote option. - Local boards of education shall continue to provide remote instruction options for all students to elect to participate in, at the discretion of the parent or guardian.

Dr. Bryant stated Senate Bill 220 designates that Local boards of education that offer Plan A to students enrolled in grades six through 12 shall, before beginning Plan A instruction, notify the Department of Health and Human Services and describe the unit's plan for moving to Plan A. A local board which operates under Plan A shall partner with the ABC Science Collaborative of the School of Medicine at Duke University (ABC Collaborative) to allow the ABC Collaborative to collect and analyze data from those units for students in Plan A in grades six through 12. Dr. Bryant shared that the required paperwork has been submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Bryant shared the percentage of students who chose Face-to-Face instruction versus Remote Learning Only service delivery across the system, as of March 25, 2021.

As of March 25, 2021

School	F2F %	RLO %
Atkinson Elementary	88%	12%
Bruce Drysdale Elementary	87%	13%
Clear Creek Elementary	87%	13%
Dana Elementary	88%	13%
Edneyville Elementary	90%	10%
Etowah Elementary	85%	15%
Fletcher Elementary	86%	14%
Hendersonville Elementary	93%	7%
Hillandale Elementary	86%	14%
Glenn C Marlow Elementary	86%	14%
Mills River Elementary	92%	8%
Sugarloaf Elementary	86%	14%
Upward Elementary	82%	18%
Apple Valley Middle	71%	29%
Flat Rock Middle	79%	21%
Hendersonville Middle	84%	16%
Rugby Middle	86%	14%
Henderson County Career Academy	83%	17%
East Henderson High	70%	30%
Hendersonville High	78%	22%
North Henderson High	69%	31%
West Henderson High	82%	18%
Henderson County Early College	48%	52%
Total	81%	19%

The StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit states that, ***Operational Flexibility and Planning for Different Scenarios:** Schools have flexibility in how they choose to operationally implement the public health requirements in this toolkit. Further, school leaders should continue to maintain plans for three different potential scenarios,*

depending on what restrictions are deemed necessary by state public health leaders at any time in the school year to control the spread of the disease. HCPS remains on Plan A in all schools across the system.

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. Since the return to Plan A, reported Covid-19 cases have significantly decreased in staff.

Dr. Bryant shared the R2L Recommendation for April 12, 2021: *(no changes from the prior recommendation presented and approved at the March 12, 2021, Special Called Meeting.)*

- Continue Plan A for all elementary students [K-G5] for the remainder of the school year
- Continue Plan A for all middle/high students [G6 - G12] for the remainder of the school year
- Monitor community health trends and workforce stability
- Continue district communications to keep parents and families informed

Dr. Bryant reminded everyone that under Plan A, all students [G6-G12] will attend on a regular “bell schedule”; the live, remote instruction option remains; guidelines for attendance will stay the same; and students and families who affirmed their choice of face-to-face instruction or RLO enrollment will continue for the remainder of the school year.

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.

Dr. Bryant discussed traditional end of year activities and how they will be affected by the current Covid-19 restrictions. He reiterated his goal is to have as many in person events as current restrictions will allow. He stated that at this time we are planning for in person graduations at each high school and most end of year award programs will be scheduled for in person attendance.

Ms. Dot Case read a letter she received from a high school senior regarding not being able to have a prom. Dr. Bryant spoke to the inability to have a prom this school year and stated that under the current governor’s Executive Order, dancing is still prohibited.

Mr. Bridges asked for clarification on the 50% capacity for the end of year events and whether it include participants. Dr. Bryant confirmed at this time the capacity restrictions include the participants as well as the spectators in attendance.

Mr. Jay Egolf asked for clarification on what the current guidelines were for social distancing, three feet or six feet. Dr. Bryant confirmed that current guidelines remain at six feet for social distancing when allowable.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt asked if students had to wear masks during PE/running if they are outside and are able to socially distance? Dr. Bryant stated, students who are outside during physical education can remove their masks if they are socially distanced according to the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit. Our teachers are doing a wonderful job to create as many opportunities as possible to over mask breaks when social distancing is possible.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, presented the Construction Update for April 12, 2021. He talked about the bleacher installation in the Auxiliary Gym, lower parking lot along Highway 25, the student entrance area A, and shared a time lapse video through April 10, 2021 for the construction project at Hendersonville High School. The secure entry renovations at Rugby Middle School are now under way with the pre-construction meeting that was held on March 31, 2021. The target start date at Rugby Middle School is April 19, 2021 and the target completion date is August 14, 2021. The roof replacement at the Central Office started April 1, 2021 with completion expected at end of April 2021.

Mr. Robert Bridges asked how many parking spaces will be available to Hendersonville High School for students and staff. Mr. Taylor said he does not have the total with him, but he would provide that information to the School Board. Mr. Bridges also inquired if the Hendersonville High School project has been shared with civic organizations in our community. Dr. John Bryant noted the project had been shared with civic organization prior

to the pandemic, but we have not been able to share the information during the pandemic since those organizations have been on pause. Dr. Bryant stated he would be happy to share this information with our community stakeholders when restrictions allow.

EQUITY UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Wendy Frye, stated that last month, our Leadership Team was invited to and participated in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dialogue with about two dozen leaders of faith communities in Henderson County. One of the items shared with them was our goal of recruiting students of color in our school system to enter the teaching profession. Dr. Frye was excited to share that we have been accepted into a DPI pilot program called “Teaching as a Profession.” This program offers two elective courses that receive articulated credit with the UNC System as well as Blue Ridge Community College. She added, our desire would be to create incentives such as educational assistance, targeted professional development, and possibly even the promise of employment for participants on completion of their degree. Dr. Frye stated that she can’t wait to see where this program leads our district as we seek to become a staff that more closely mirrors the diversity of our students.

Ms. Dot Case asked if “Teaching as a Profession” will be available in all of our high schools. Dr. Frye noted that it is undetermined but funding will be included for one teacher at this time. The program will be funded by CTE funds and determined by their months of employment. The School Board discussed ways the program could be implemented to reach as many high school students as possible. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt asked why we are just now doing this program. Dr. Frye said that NCDPI only recently released CTE funds to support this program. Mr. Robert Bridges asked if the program is open to all students. Dr. Frye noted we would like to have as many high school students as possible participate in this program. Mr. Blair Craven looks forward to seeing how this program pans out and stated, if we need to get to more high schools involved in the future, we will figure out how to pay for more teachers. Mr. Bridges noted it’s one way to recruit possible future teachers. Mr. Craven asked if students would be reimbursed for travel during the portion of the program that will be traveling to schools. Dr. Frye mentioned we have not historically provided travel reimbursement for students who are interns or apprentices. Mr. Craven asked Dr. Frye to bring transportation information back to the School Board, once the program is initiated, so he could to see if there is a way the travel reimbursement could possibly be funded.

CHILD CARE SERVICES UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent, Scott Rhodes, shared the Child Care Update. He stated that the Financial Projections for March 2021 are: Revenues: \$86,818.00 and Expenses: \$68,411.42 with the FY Operational Profit/(Loss): \$18,406.58. Mr. Rhodes stated that we received \$54,014 in operational grant money from DHHS in March, 2021 and will receive another \$54,000 in April, 2021. Mr. Rhodes shared that he has received three Request for Qualifications (RFQ) showing interest in the Child Care Services Program. The three vendor presentations are scheduled for April 15, 2021.

Mr. Blair Craven asked Mr. Rhodes what he believes has accounted for the increase in revenue? Mr. Rhodes noted that grades 3-5 students are now back in school on Plan A and the ‘pay by the week’ initiative was recently enacted. Mr. Rhodes feels both changes have helped to increase Child Care revenues. Mr. Jay Egolf asked to look at the revenue trend in the total fund balance. Mr. Rhodes said he would get with Mr. Bernie Sochia to get the requested information together to share with the School Board.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Chief Finance Officer, Bernie Sochia, presented the Financial Statements as of March 31, 2021. He shared the results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of March 31, 2021: Revenues received total \$27,355,549 and expenditures made total \$18,989,855. Mr. Sochia said, in this year of unpredictability, to ensure that State funds do not go unspent, we have used those allotments first (rather than split between Local and State all year) where practicable. He stated that moving forward, those recurring expenses will be all in Local Funds. He also presented the results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of March 31, 2021: Revenue of \$1,733,670 has been received with one installment of County appropriation remaining. Expenditures of \$974,042 have been made to this point. The balance consists of Covid re-entry, roofing and paving projects and the bus replacement transactions made by DPI that are recorded on our books.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

Superintendent John M. Bryant mentioned the HCBPE Budget Workshops will be held on April 14 and April 29 at 12:00pm in the boardroom of the Central Office. He also mentioned the HCEF Hall of Fame will be a virtual celebration this year and will be held on April 28. Due to Covid restrictions, each high school will hold their Tops Scholars Recognition May 20 at their individual schools. Board members will be invited to celebrate at the Top Scholars event. Dr. Bryant stated that High School Graduations will be held on May 28. Dr. Bryant stated it is his honor to serve as the Superintendent of Henderson County Schools.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Jay Egolf. *(Unanimously approved at 5:34pm.)*

Minutes approved: May 10, 2021