

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

### **MINUTES**

December 13, 2021

Revised April 11, 2022

The Henderson County Board of Public Education held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 13, 2021, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4<sup>th</sup> 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 December 14, 2021. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link at <http://hcpsnc.org/live>.

Board Members Present:	Mr. Blair Craven, Chairperson; Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt, Vice Chairperson; Mr. Robert Bridges; Ms. Dot Case; Mr. Jay Egolf and Dr. Kathy Revis.
Board Member Remote:	Mrs. Stacey Caskey
Administrative Staff Present:	Dr. John Bryant, Superintendent; Dr. Wendy Frye, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer; Mr. Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer; and Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer
Attorney Present:	None
Board Clerk:	Mrs. Stephanie Alfrey

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Superintendent John M. Bryant called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05 pm. He requested a moment of silence for the people in Illinois, Kentucky and Arkansas who lost homes, businesses, and loved ones to the tornadoes. Dr. Bryant led all those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Assistant Superintendent Scott Rhodes recognized Dr. Marsha Justice as the 2020-2021 HCPS Principal of the Year. He noted the HCPS Principal of the Year is chosen by the principals and the honor of being chosen by her peers for this recognition and how she optimizes what is to be a principal in HCPS. Superintendent John Bryant noted how Dr. Justice is all in with her students, staff, and school community. Dr. Justice is one of the finest in her profession and among her colleagues in HCPS. Dr. Justice was presented with a plaque.

Mayor Barbara Volk attended the meeting as the Chairman of the Land of Sky Regional Counsel. She recognized Dr. John Bryant as one of five public school superintendents in the Western North Carolina region to receive the "Extraordinary Public Service Award" from the Land of Sky Regional Council, as part of their Annual Awards conferred last month. She presented Dr. Bryant with a plaque.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey joined the meeting via audio at approximately 4:13 pm.

### **ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS**

Per School Board Policy 2110, Superintendent John Bryant opened the floor for nominations for the position of Board Chairperson for the term beginning December 13, 2021. Mrs. Stacey Caskey nominated Mr. Blair Craven to serve as the Board Chairperson. Dr. Bryant closed the floor for nominations. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Bridges, Yes; Ms. Case, Yes; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mrs. Caskey, Yes; Dr. Revis, Yes. Mr. Craven was unanimously appointed to the office. This will be the third consecutive year for Mr. Craven to serve as Board Chairperson. Per Board Policy 2200, Mr. Craven will be eligible for one more re-election before he is required to rotate off for two years.

Dr. Bryant opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson. Mrs. Stacey Caskey nominated Dr. Kathy Revis to serve as the Board Vice Chairperson. Mr. Jay Egolf nominated Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt to serve as the Board Vice Chairperson. Dr. Bryant closed the floor for nominations and called for a vote on the motion

for Dr. Kathy Revis to serve as the Vice Chairperson. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Bridges, No; Ms. Case, Yes; Mrs. Holt, No; Mr. Craven, No; Mrs. Caskey, Yes; Mr. Egolf, No; Dr. Revis, No. The motion failed 5 to 2. Dr. Bryant called for a vote on the motion for Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt to serve as the Vice Chairperson. Mr. Bridges, Yes; Ms. Case, No; Mrs. Holt, Yes; Mr. Craven, Yes; Mr. Egolf, Yes; Mrs. Caskey, No; Dr. Revis, No. The motion passes 4 to 3. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt will serve as the Vice Chairperson to the Board of Education. Mr. Blair Craven took over as chair of the meeting.

#### AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Blair Craven acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda. Mr. Craven moved that the agenda be approved with an amendment to move item A under new business to be after the Program Highlight. Seconded by Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt. Roll Call vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Yes; Holt, Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. (*Passes 7 to 0.*)

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT – Holiday Music performed by HHS String Quartet

Dr. Wendy Frye introduced Ms. Amanda Tant. Ms. Tant is both the orchestra and chorus teacher at Hendersonville Middle and Hendersonville High schools. Ms. Tant thanked the Board for the funding they approved at the beginning of the school year to expand access to instruments in band and orchestra for students. She expressed appreciation from the teachers in HCPS who teach orchestra and band. She noted the importance of this access and what this access means to the orchestra and band programs. She read a letter of appreciation from the band teacher at West Henderson High before introducing the Henderson High School string quartet.

The Hendersonville High School string quartet was comprised of Sean Maccaroni playing the violin, Gaby Magallan Aguilar playing the violin, Rokem Bayne playing the viola, and Aiden Chacon playing the cello. The string quartet played three pieces: It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year, Winter, and Carol of the Bells/Green Sleeves.

#### BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

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

#### BOARD OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt addressed bullying and threats against Board members. She spoke about how inappropriate these actions are toward the Board members. She noted the overwhelming number of emails has made it difficult to respond to everyone. The delay in response may continue as the focus needs to be about educating children and on a strategic plan for the school district. She noted the Board will continue to fight against the quarantine guidelines.

Mr. Jay Egolf spoke about the security measures that were in place for today's meeting and how terrible it is that it has come to this action to keep the Board members safe. The Board is an elected group who can vote differently and have the same goals. They have different ways of getting to the end result. He noted we need to have patience, grace, and forgiveness. We will all get through this time.

Mrs. Stacey Caskey said we are passionate and all here trying to do what is best for our kids. She noted that at times we say things that we don't mean. She spoke about the great job Mr. Craven has done to navigate the Board through this pandemic. She noted the increase in the number of 5- to 11-year-olds who have been vaccinated and have benefited from the delay to go masks optional until January 1, 2022.

Ms. Dot Case noted that Hendersonville High School SRO Joreeca Dinnall is one of three officers across the nation to win the national 2021 Axon RISE Officer award.

Mr. Robert Bridges spoke of the expectational program for Veterans Day that Edneyville Elementary School did to honor veterans. Mr. Bridges commended them on the great job they did with the program.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Blair Craven stated that 40 pre-submitted public comments were received for the December 13, 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. The breakdown of topics received from the pre-submitted public comments are as follows: 15 in favor of the mask mandate; six against mask mandates; three request the Board make decisions based on science and data; eight in favor of optional masks for all grade

levels; two disappointed in the School Board; two against banning books in schools; two against masks and COVID-19 vaccinations; one regarding quarantine guidance needing to change; and one from a HCPS student regarding dress code.

Mr. Craven noted with eight people who signed to speak during public comments each person will have full three minutes to speak. Public comment started at 5:20 pm and ended at 5:42 pm. One HCPS student spoke during public comment. The breakdown of topics during public comment are as follows: one in favor of mask mandate; one in favor of masks and COVID-19 vaccinations; one asked Board to consider masks in future if needed; one against mask mandate; one requests the Board make decisions based on science and data; one requests parent advisory group; one regarding issues with the school system; and one regarding the way history is taught in the schools.

## CONSENT AGENDA

### A. Meeting Schedule

1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting *[Monday, January 10, 2022 4:00 p.m., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm)(Boardroom)]*

### B. Minutes

1. November 8, 2021 *(Regular Business Meeting)*
2. November 22, 2021 *(Emergency Called Meeting)*

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

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

### E. Contract for Etowah Elementary School Chiller

Mr. Blair Craven called for a motion to approve the consent. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. Roll Call vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Holt, Yes; Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. *(Passes 7 to 0.)*

## OLD BUSINESS

None.

## NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval – Current Face Covering Guidance and Policy – *(Dr. John M. Bryant, Superintendent)*  
Superintendent John Bryant noted Board action is required on whether to maintain or amend the Board's current face covering policy as required by S.L. 2021-130. Currently, face coverings must be worn by all students and staff in grades PreK - Grade 6 until January 1, 2022. This guidance applies to all teachers, staff, and adult visitors when indoors at all PreK - Grade 6 school locations, unless a legal exception applies. Face coverings are optional for all teachers, staff, and adult visitors when indoors in all Grade 7 – Grade 12 settings and all school locations. Face coverings remain required while traveling on buses or other group transportation settings. Dr. Bryant requested to present the Return to Learn Update from the Board/Superintendent's Reports prior to the Board voting on face covering guidance and policy. The agenda was modified without objection from the Board members.

After Dr. Bryant presented the Return to Learn update, Mr. Blair Craven made a motion for face coverings to be optional in all school locations starting January 1, 2022. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. Roll Call vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Yes; Holt, Yes; Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. *(Passes 7 to 0.)*

### B. Approval – 2021-2022 Initial Budget – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the 2021-22 Henderson County Public Schools' Initial Budget Resolution for approval. This budget resolution serves as the beginning budget for all funds for subsequent amendments. The total local current expense and capital outlay funds are consistent with the 2021-22 Preliminary Budget previously approved with adjustments made to reflect legislative and budgetary changes made from the State and with the benefit of COVID funding. The State Public School Fund reflects the most current dollar and position allotments as directed by the State. Likewise, the Federal Grants Fund reflects the budgets as approved by NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to date. Mr. Sochia noted this budget is with a fully operating school unlike last year's budget. He noted the Federal Elementary and Secondary School

Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are required to be in the budget. However, all the funds will not be spent by June 30, 2022. The Child Nutrition and Child Care Enterprise Funds reflect continuation budgets with adjustments for all legislative benefit changes, participation data and additional Covid funding. The Child Care Enterprise Funds are double what they were last year. This increase is due to more participation in the program as well as federal COVID funds that have been received. Child Nutrition has increased from last year. The participation has increased as well as the cost of food. The food cost matches the amount the system is reimbursed for the food; therefore, no decrease in the budget. Mr. Sochia noted the salary increase that was approved in the State budget will be retro paid back to July 1, 2021. The impact of the salary increase is not known at this time. The State is still determining how the retro paid will be processed. The State bonuses and the new salary schedules will be paid in January 2022. The retention bonus from ESSER funds will be in February 2022. The retro pay will be calculated and most likely paid in March 2022. Dr. John Bryant noted the State directed the school systems to not move to the new salary schedules until January 2022. The process to do the retro pay is no easy feat. Dr. Bryant also spoke about the supplemental assistance allowance. This allowance means 95 counties in NC will receive funds based on the county's tax base, median household income and effective tax rate. The amount allotted to HCPS is estimated at \$715. There is no direction on when those funds will be paid. Mr. Sochia gave credit to Mrs. Kelda Livingston, HCPS Budget Analyst, for digging into all the specifics as soon as the details have been made available.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Initial Budget Resolution for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Ms. Dot Case seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Yes; Holt, Yes; Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. *(Passes 7 to 0.)*

C. Approval – Substitute Teacher and Bus Driver Recruitment and Incentive Plan – *(Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent)*

Mr. Scott Rhodes recognized the ongoing issues of a shortage of substitute teachers and bus drivers. He presented a recruitment plan designed by Mrs. Molly McGowan Gorsuch and himself to address the current substitute teacher and bus driver shortages, including funding for bonus incentive pay structures through this school year and the recruitment marketing campaign recommended by district staff.

Mr. Rhodes noted the purpose is to increase the fill rate for substitute teachers in Henderson County and increase the number of bus drivers in Henderson County. This importance is workforce stability, which is an issue the school system is facing along with other employers.

The substitute teacher fill rate for October 2021 was 53% in Henderson County Public Schools and 57% as a national average. Pre pandemic, the substitute teacher fill rate for October 2019 was 84% in Henderson County Public Schools and 78% as a national average. In October 2021, 253 Teacher Assistants were pulled to fill a substitute teacher position in a classroom. While the Teacher Assistant are paid at base Teacher pay for that day of coverage, this coverage resulted in 2,024 hours of missed instructional support.

The following strategies are to address the substitute teacher crisis:

1. Send out survey to current substitute pool in an attempt to find out why substitute teachers are not working.
  - a. Top three reasons not substitute teaching anymore are pandemic, pay, or found another job.
2. Create a bonus pay structure until the end of this school year using ESSER funds. If a substitute teacher received the \$400 per month, it would be equal to the ESSER retention bonus that the substitute teachers are not eligible to receive.
  - a. Substitute teacher for 5 to 9 days per month = \$200/month
  - b. Substitute teacher for 10 or more days per month = \$400/month
3. Substitute teacher pay increase starting January 1, 2022
  - a. Non-certified = \$91/day
  - b. Certified = \$110/day
4. Develop "We Need You in 2022" recruitment marketing to increase the number of substitute teachers to roll out in January 2022.
  - a. Spokesperson Recruitment Videos – shown on HCPS YouTube channel, on HCPS website, and posted on social media
  - b. Social Media (targeted ads) – the targeted ads would reach people who do not follow an HCPS social media page.

- c. Direct Mail ads – reach people in the community that may not have digital access. This direct mail ad would reach about 5,000 people. The mail routes can be used to target specific areas as needed.

Mrs. McGowan Gorsuch shared the details of the “We Need You in 2022” marketing strategy and how that marketing plan will reach individuals. She showed samples of the photos that will be used in the marketing campaign. Mr. Rhodes noted that the anticipated cost cannot be determined at this time because it would depend on how many people take this opportunity. In October 2021, it would have cost approximately \$18,000 to do this recruitment and incentive plan. The investment may be large; however, the benefits of keeping Teacher Assistants in the classroom is important as well as filling the other positions with qualified substitute teachers.

Mr. Rhodes shared that similarly, the national bus driver crisis has impacted Henderson County, requiring teachers, school administrators, and other HCPS staff with active CDLs to add bus routes to their challenging school schedules. As of December 2, 27 bus driver positions are vacant.

The following strategies are to address the bus driver crisis:

1. Bus driver survey
  - a. Top three reasons not driving a bus anymore are pandemic, pay, or found another job.
2. Develop "We Need You in 2022" recruitment marketing to create a bonus pay structure until the end of this school year. Each am and pm route is considered a trip.
  - a. 10-19 trips a month = \$50/month
  - b. 20-29 trips a month = \$100/month
  - c. 30+ trips a month = \$200/month
3. Starting January 1, 2022 starting pay goes up to \$13/hour.
4. "We Need You in 2022" recruitment marketing to increase the number of bus drivers:
  - a. Spokesperson Recruitment Videos
  - b. Social Media (targeted ads)
  - c. Direct Mail ads

Mr. Rhodes said not there is not a way to determine the cost right now of the bus driver recruitment and incentive plans. Dr. Bryant noted that if all 111 school buses had a full-time driver, the cost would be \$22,000 per month if all the routes were covered. Mr. Rhodes clarified for the Board the bus driver incentive plan is for regular and sub bus drivers. The goal is to cover the bus routes with an incentive and to reward the ones already driving a school bus. Mr. Rhodes said the cost would be tracked and the information provided to the Board each month. The question is if this will move the needle to fill the positions.

Mr. Rhodes noted the marketing will cost \$7,500. Mrs. McGowan Gorsuch said the most expensive part of the marketing is the video. She noted that thanks to the school system’s great partnership with Rhodes Branding the video cost will come in under the typical \$1,000 cost for video per minute. The direct mail cost design is being done in house by Mrs. McGowan Gorsuch so the cost will include the local printing services of printing, postage, sorting, and getting to USPS.

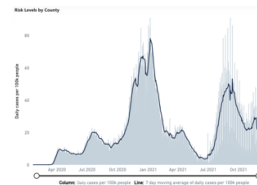
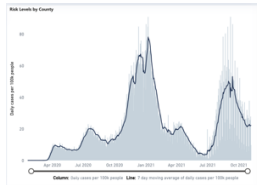
Mr. Rhodes said the qualifications for substitute teachers is that they have 48 hours of college credit or an associate’s degree. A school bus driver needs a valid Class B Commercial Driver License (CDL) with P and S endorsements, a current DOT Medical Card (after medical exam), and a negative DOT drug test result. The costs for the DOT Medical Exam and DOT Drug Test are reimbursable after the employee drives once for a HCPS school and the DMV permit and DMV license after the employee has been employed for six months are reimbursable. Mr. Rhodes noted for the Board that background checks are done on all employees. Mrs. McGowan Gorsuch shared that the “Careers” section of the district’s website will also be improved for a more streamlined user experience, to make it easier for individuals to apply for jobs.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Substitute Teacher and Bus Driver Recruitment and Incentive Plan, as presented. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. *Roll Call Vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Yes; Holt, Yes; Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. (Passes 7 to 0.)*

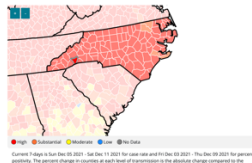
## BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

### A. RETURN TO LEARN UPDATE

Superintendent John 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 December 12, 2021, the rolling average in Henderson County was 38.9/100,000 people. For some perspective, these two graphs show the seven-day rolling average as of November 6 and December 11, respectively.



NC DHHS previously provided the NCDHHS County 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. The map shows December 5 to December 11 for case rate and December 3 to December 9 for percent positivity. Henderson County is in the high transmission area along with most of North Carolina, which is a seven-day rolling average of 25.0 or higher.



Since August 2, 2021, the HCPS district dashboard for COVID-19 cases has been updated. The dashboard reflects individual school positivity case rates and cumulative case rates. The information is updated the business day after at 9 am. On Friday, October 22, 2021, daily alert call notifications for school affected cases ceased. The COVID-19 district dashboard will continue to be updated each business day. Additionally, the weekly quarantine numbers will be on the COVID-19 district dashboard each Monday. Districtwide notifications for clusters will continue as required by law. A cluster is five positive cases in a school community that are epidemiologically linked.

The expectations of the information parents can receive and from who they can receive the information are HCPS will:

- Report school-affected positives on the COVID-19 District Dashboard each business day
- 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

Dr. Bryant detailed the current operations regarding face coverings. Face coverings must be worn by all students, all teachers, staff, and adult visitors when indoors at all Pre-K through Grade 6 school settings, unless a legal exception applies, until January 1, 2022. Face coverings are optional for all students, all teachers, staff, and adult visitors when indoors at all Grade 7 through Grade 12 school settings. Face coverings are also required while traveling on buses or other group transportation settings.

The map below shows the face covering requirement by LEA for face mask policies from information compiled by the NC School Board Association as December 1, 2021. Red is masks are optional. Blue is masks required. Dark green indicates determination on masks is being made week to week or biweekly basis based on percent positive in the community. Light green shows the difference between a city and county school systems. Gray shows the mask determination is school by school. Yellow show masks are differentiated by groups.



According to Senate Bill 654, local school districts are required to adopt a policy regarding the use of face coverings by employees and students for the 2021-22 school year. The governing body must vote at least once a month about whether or not a face covering policy should be modified. This legislation is why agenda item A under new business exists.

Dr. Bryant shared the resulting quarantine impacts. For the week of December 6 to December 10, HCPS had 84 school-affected positive case totals, which resulted in 292 quarantines. The breakdown by grade level is elementary schools had 35 positive cases and 83 quarantines; middle schools had 16 positive cases and 68 quarantines; and high schools had 33 positive cases and 141 quarantines.

Dr. Bryant presented information on the “Test to Stay” Study through the ABC Collaborative, which is a partnership with Duke University and Department of Health and Human Services. The study overview is as follows:

- The “Test to Stay in School: COVID-19 Testing Following Exposure in K-12 School Communities” research study will evaluate the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools. Participants in the study will be students or staff who are identified as close contacts to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
- All individuals participating in this study are required to consent and will be allowed to remain in school after having close contact with a positive COVID-19 case in the school setting, provided they are tested for COVID-19 at pre-specified intervals, have no symptoms, continue proper masking at school, and remain negative on the rapid antigen tests.

What does this mean for HCPS students/staff?

- Primarily, it will allow students and staff to remain in school despite exposure to COVID-19. This will minimize disruptions to the school day and home operations due to quarantine. Participants may also benefit from testing, symptom screening, masking, and early identification of COVID-19.
- Participants will be tested on the day after exposure (day 1), and again on days 3, 5, and 7 after exposure. Participants will also report their symptoms, if any, for 14 days following exposure.
- A school nurse or other designee will perform COVID-19 tests on consenting individuals who have been exposed at the prespecified timepoints.

Dr. Bryant noted the next steps are:

- Requires approval of Board of Education and Local Health Department.
- With such approval, further review details of study participation, establish logistics plan, and determine launch date.
- Coordinate with Health Department staff and begin district communications.

Dr. Bryant reviewed the following summary of thoughts:

- 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.

The Board discussed the study and possible participation. Dr. Bryant will verify the length of time a mask is required if a person participates in the “Test to Stay” and will provide the information to the Board. In order to participate in the study, a parent would have to provide direct and active consent for their child. Board approval today is required in order to explore further what this partnership would look like with the Henderson County Department of Health (HCHD) as well as to gather more information about the study. The ABC Collaborative requires Board approval. The HCHD staff and school nurses will be the ones to administer tests to the individuals who opt to participate in the study. The start date if the Board chooses to approve would be part of the next steps. At this point, the HCHD is committed to learning more and explore the details. The Board discussed there is no other avenues to reduce quarantines at this time. The study presents a pathway to reduce the quarantines. The Board clarified that if the school system proceeds with the study a person can choose to quarantine and not participate in the study. The materials to perform the tests are provided by the study. The Board asked Dr. Bryant to get clarification if the test could be done with the child’s pediatrician instead of by the school nurse. Board members asked if the HCHD could update the flow chart to reflect a person with antibodies and what that means for that person regarding quarantines. Dr. Bryant said he would follow up with the HCHD.

Mr. Blair Craven made a motion to approve further exploration of the “Test to Stay” study. Mr. Robert Bridges seconded the motion. *Roll Call Vote: Bridges, Yes; Case, Holt, Yes; Yes; Egolf, Yes; Revis, Yes; Caskey, Yes; Craven, Yes. (Passes 7 to 0.)*

The Board asked about the letter discussed at the November 22 meeting regarding quarantine guidelines the school system is required to follow by law to government officials. Dr. Bryant noted the decision to approve the continued exploration of “Test to Stay” study was the last piece information needed to finalize the letter. Now that it has been approved, he will update that portion of the letter and will provide the letter to the Board for review. The letter’s purpose is to share the Board’s operational concerns regarding quarantining, how quarantining effects students, how that effects our instructional services. The letter states the inconsistency, the concerns and the challenges that were noted in the November 22 Board meeting. The summary paragraph is affected by the action the Board is taking. The letter will be provided to state leaders, the HCHD, and our elected leaders. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners have also expressed similar concerns regarding quarantines.

The Board meeting resumed with item A under new business.

## B. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF (ESSER) UPDATE

Dr. John Bryant said the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) initial slides were presented to the Board during their July 2021 workshop. The Board has approved these resources.

He noted the following: *Congress set aside approximately \$13.2 billion of the \$30.75 billion allotted to the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). The Department will award these grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the Nation. ESSER Fund awards to SEAs are in the same proportion as each State received funds under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, in fiscal year 2019.*

ESSER II funds expire September 30, 2023. These funds also can be used in the same way as ESSER I including:

- coordinating with public health departments;
- conducting activities to address the needs of students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth;



- purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity as well as assistive technology or adaptive equipment);
- summer learning, and supplemental after-school programs;
- mental health services;
- addressing learning loss;
- school facility repairs to reduce risk of virus transmission and support student health; and implementing public health protocols including policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for school-reopening;
- implementing activities to maintain the operation and continuity of services and to employ existing staff.

ESSER III Funds expire September 30, 2024. At least 20% of these funds must be used to address learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs. The funds also can be used in the same way as ESSER I/II including:

- coordinating with public health departments;
- conducting activities to address the needs of students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth;
- purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity as well as assistive technology or adaptive equipment);
- summer learning, and supplemental after-school programs;
- mental health services;
- addressing learning loss;
- school facility repairs to reduce risk of virus transmission and support student health; and implementing public health protocols including policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for school-reopening;
- implementing activities to maintain the operation and continuity of services and to employ existing staff.

ESSER III targeted and strategic ways to be used are:

- Learning Loss (Recovery)
- Acceleration & Advancement
- Summer Learning
- Unassigned
- Infrastructure/Facility Improvements

The unassigned category represents what we don't know in regards to future needs regarding COVID-19. ESSER III is \$22 million with 20% earmarked for learning loss. ESSER II is \$9.9 million.

Each area is categorized based on the specific buckets and the individual areas that fall under each of them. What are we proposing to address these issues:

- Learning Recovery  
To address learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs.
- Acceleration & Advancement  
To conduct activities to address the needs of students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth;  
To purchase educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity as well as assistive technology or adaptive equipment);  
For supplemental after-school programs;  
For mental health services;  
To address learning loss.
- Summer Learning  
For summer learning and supplemental after-school programs.
- Unassigned

All categories.

- Infrastructure  
For school facility repairs to reduce risk of virus transmission and support student health;  
For implementing public health protocols including policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for school-reopening;  
For coordinating with public health departments.

Dr. Bryant mentioned the Board prioritizing five additional School Nurses to give each school coverage is a part of infrastructure. The Board asked if funds could be used from the infrastructure line to provide additional support for “Test to Stay.” Dr. Bryant acknowledged that would be a way to use those funds to support the Henderson County Department of Health (HCDH).

While budgets are flexible, the following is the funding amounts allocated to each category:

- Learning Recovery (25%)  
[\$5,559,437]
- Acceleration & Advancement (25%)  
[\$5,559,437]
- Summer Learning (20%)  
[\$4,447,550]
- Unassigned (20%)  
[\$4,447,550]
- Infrastructure/Facility Improvements (10%)  
[\$2,223,775]

Additional Allowable Uses for these funds are:

- Improve air quality
- Provide principals/leaders with resources
- Improve preparedness and response
- Training to minimize virus transmission
- Supplies to clean and sanitize
- Long-term closure activities

The following has been allocated to date:

- HB82 Legislated Summer Learning
- 2021-2022 Retention Bonus to All HCPS Employees to be paid in February 2022 [\$2000 for full-time personnel/\$1000 for part-time personnel]
- Additional School Nurse Positions [5]
- Teacher Assistants to Support Quarantined Students [23]
- Curriculum Support Materials and Resources
- Bus Driver Overtime Pay

Dr. Bryant noted the allocated items to date are \$10 million. The retention bonus and the summer legislated learning are huge lifts in addition to the 23 school personnel to support quarantined students.

Proposed Future Allocations are as follows:

- Substitute teacher and bus driver incentive pay
- Teacher assistant coverage for LETRS professional learning [13]
- Technology upgrades
- Classroom instructional technology replacement

Dr. Bryant spoke of the Teacher Assistant coverage for the LETRS training that would provide a full-time person at each school that would give Teachers’ time to State required LETRS course work during the school day. The course work is graduate level and the time is needed to support these Teachers. The technology upgrades are needed to replace the technology items that need to be replaced but there is no current funding source to replace them such as Smartboards and Elmos in the classrooms. These upgrades would be tangible resources beyond 2024.

The Board inquired about classroom pilots that would enable videoed and livestreamed to students who are quarantined and opt not to participate in the “Test to Stay” if that study becomes available. Mr. Rick Fender spoke of the equipment upgrades at each school that were done last school year and noted the technology

could be better. The needed equipment for the classroom pilots can be looked into to see what would work best. The Board also mentioned recorded lessons from teachers for Letterland lessons or other areas that would work as a recorded lesson that can help give students who are quarantined or homebound for any reason a boost. Dr. Bryant noted that flipped instruction is what this type of instruction was called before the pandemic and is something to be looked at moving forward to find better ways to assist with instruction.

### C. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Carl Taylor provided the Board with status updates on the construction and facility projects currently underway or planned in the near future. The work inside Stillwell at Hendersonville High is on the framing and drywall work. The work on Stillwell will be completed in February 2022. Footings have been poured for the new press box as well as the new drain lines delivered at the field.

The renovations to replace the freezer serving HCPS Child Nutrition Services operations are now complete. Paving and roof replacements will be done at various school sites. The paving and roof replacement contracts have been awarded. The work will take place in the spring. Rugby Middle School project is pending the delivery of two doors. The delivery should be in January 2022. The HCPS Warehouse site has been graded. The project will be complete in June 2022.

Bids are opening this week for the HCPS security camera video management system upgrades at the middle and high schools. The requests for proposals will be posted after January 1, 2022 for the auditorium sound and lighting system upgrades at East and West Henderson High Schools.

Replacement of auditorium seating at North Henderson High and Apple Valley Middle is scheduled to begin in March, starting with demolition of existing seating on March 1 and March 15, respectively. Anticipated completion of new seating installation is March 30 for the high school and April 15 for the middle school. Replacement of auditorium seating in the Board of Education boardroom will follow, with an expected completion date of May 7.

The Board inquired if there was an update on the naming of the Hendersonville High School auditorium. Dr. John Bryant said he would bring a follow up to the Board in the new year from meetings with staff and community members. The Board inquired on the status of the Upward entry project. Mr. Taylor noted the project is scheduled to begin in the spring.

### D. EQUITY UPDATE

Dr. Wendy Frye updated the Board on the various ways HCPS and the state are working to remove barriers for students. Beginning in January, kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in all elementary schools will participate in professional learning on the science of reading. Based on the science of reading, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training includes the most recent research on how to teach students to read. The district is looking to hire one person for each elementary school to cover the Teachers for 90 minutes per week to complete their course material. The 20-minute bridge to practice portion can be done during the instructional day. All elementary teachers will start the program in January and it will take two years to complete.

Dr. Frye noted that for many students, learning to read is a challenge. Scarborough's Rope captures the complexity of learning to read. Scarborough's Reading Rope is made up of lower and upper strands. When all these component parts intertwine it results in skilled and accurate, fluent reading combined with strong comprehension.

Dr. Frye reported on the planned Fall Arts Fairs at the elementary grade levels, designed to introduce a variety of musical instruments to students at a young age. Through "band visits" from middle and high schools, elementary students are able to meet student musician mentors in their own communities: the North Henderson High and Apple Valley Middle bands visited five elementary schools in November, and West Henderson High and Rugby Middle bands will visit three elementary schools in December, performing for the younger students and distributing "wind instrument try-out kits." The wind instrument try-out kits gave children the opportunity to see how the mouthpieces will fit in their mouths. In collaboration with our Director of School Safety, Mr. Scott Masington, a process for how to sanitize the kits is in place. Arts Fairs scheduled for the Spring in the elementary schools will include visual and performing arts.

Dr. Frye spoke of the instructional rounds. In a recent walkthrough, Dr. Frye noticed Ms. Sam Guzzardo uses four paperclips with eagles on them to show the high yield strategies she will be using that day in the lessons.

Dr. Frye mentioned HCPS was asked to present our summer learning program at the AIM Conference in Raleigh. Dr. John Bryant, Dr. Frye, and Dr. Marcie Wilson presented about summer learning. A lot of people were interested in how our teachers and community partners worked together during summer learning. The State Board of Education has approved funding for the “Portrait of a Graduate” initiative, part of State Superintendent Catherine Truitt’s four-year strategic vision, “Operation Polaris.” This “portrait” will eventually become a tool for districts to identify and highlight the skills, attributes and knowledge that students should possess when they graduate high school to be prepared for the post-secondary plans of their choice.

#### E. CHILD CARE SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Scott Rhodes shared the Child Care Update. He stated that the financial projections for November 2021 are: Revenues: \$88,128.00 and Expenses: \$66,474.09 with the FY Operational Profit/(Loss): \$21,653.91. Mr. Rhodes noted the Child Care employees are eligible for the retention bonus.

#### F. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the Financial Statements. The results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2021-22 fiscal year as of November 30, 2021 are as follows: Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2021-22 fiscal year as of November 30, 2021: Revenues received total \$15,782,700 and expenditures made total \$13,090,038. While no salary increases have been implemented yet, the increases in expenditures from last year which are largest in Operational Support Services (6500) are attributable to students being at school this year.

#### G. GENERAL OPERATIONS

Dr. John Bryant mentioned the upcoming dates: December 20 – 31 is Winter Break for All Staff and Students; January 3 is an Optional Teacher Workday for Early College and Traditional Calendars and Required Teacher Workday for Flex Calendar; January 4 is a Required Teacher Workday for Early College Calendar; January 5 is the HCBPE School Tours, 10:00am at Etowah Elementary, Rugby Middle, and North Henderson High; and January 10 is the HCBPE Regular Meeting, 4:00pm, Closed Session, 3:00pm, Boardroom.

Dr. Bryant thanked the Board members for their leadership and service to the school system. He also thanked the men and women who serve alongside him. He noted the exceptional leadership in this school system. While it doesn’t mean perfect, it means perfectly committed. People who are here for the right reason, doing the right work, the best that they can.

Mr. Blair Craven thanked Dr. Bryant on behalf of the Board for his service as Superintendent on his year anniversary and noted the great job he has done. Truly appreciates all that everyone does.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Jay Egolf. *(Unanimously approved at 7:01 pm.)*

Minutes approved: April 11, 2022