

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

May 11, 2020

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in regular business meeting on May 11, 2020, beginning at 2:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC. Due to Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Orders affecting all of North Carolina's public schools, Henderson County School buildings were closed for all students beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 and will remain closed until the end of the 2019-2020 school year. These closures were a precautionary measure against the transmission of novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This closure affected all school programming, including before- and after-school activities, on-campus childcare, all athletic and extracurricular practices and competitions, and all weekend events.

The May 11, 2020 School Board meeting was held in accordance with approved, safety thresholds for public gatherings established by local health officials and the Governor. Capacity for the public/staff was capped at no more than 10 persons. Therefore, no members of the public were allowed into the meeting room. The Board received public comment prior to the meeting, including comment on the proposed budget, subject to time limitations set by the Board, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-51 during this meeting by reading aloud emails received for this purpose. Emails intending to act as public comment and/or comment on the budget were submitted at input@hcpsnc.org and followed these guidelines : * must have a subject line reading "May 11 Public Input". * must contain the name and address of sender. * must be received no later than 9:00am on Monday, May 11, 2020. * should be limited to 3 minutes in length when read aloud. The meeting was accessible to the public via a live stream link on the HCPS YouTube channel. In a historic move, this meeting was the first Henderson County Board of Public Education meeting to be streamed live with video and sound available to the public.

Board Members Present: Blair Craven, Chairperson; Rick Wood, Vice Chairperson; Michael Absher; Dot Case; Mary Louise Corn; Jay Egolf and Amy Lynn Holt.

Administrative Staff Present: Bo Caldwell, Ed.S. Superintendent; John Bryant, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services; Jan King, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer; Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer.

Attorney Present: Mr. Dean Shatley

Board Clerk: Mrs. Kathy R. Johnson

CALL TO ORDER –

Board Chairman, Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Per the updated remote meetings law, Mr. Craven stated that all action items would be approved via a roll call vote by Board members.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Blair Craven led all those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Blair Craven asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the agenda be approved as presented, seconded by Ms. Dot Case. (*Unanimously approved.*)

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven stated that during this extremely hectic time, our school leaders have accomplished so

many things that have never been done before in Henderson County. He thanked our teachers for their tremendous efforts attacking the challenges presented to them and feels they all deserve a round of applause. Mr. Craven also thanked Dr. Jan King, in particular, for her leadership in rolling out the *Learn from Home* remote learning model to teachers and students alike. He added, many systems took weeks to initiate their protocols and accomplish what we achieved in a matter of days through Dr. Jan King's leadership. Mr. Craven also thanked all of the Leadership Team members for their tireless work throughout the pandemic.

BOARD MEMBERS OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn echoed Mr. Craven's comments and stated how proud she is of our folks putting together these programs so quickly and for them going above and beyond the call to accomplish all they have so far.

Ms. Dot Case added that our cafeteria staff, bus drivers, community members and parents have all worked so hard together.

Mr. Rick Wood voiced his agreement with the previous comments and added that he is very proud of our school system. Mr. Wood shared his regrets in hearing the news of long time Times News photographer, Patrick Sullivan, being dismissed from his position. Mr. Wood stated that Patrick was a true friend of education and his dedication to our children will be missed. He added that Patrick also worked with our students as a volunteer Robotics Team sponsor.

Mr. Jay Egolf stated that as a fan of meeting transparency, he wanted to thank the Technology department employees for their work preparing for today's meeting. He added, meetings are not typically live streamed, but through their efforts, people are watching today via YouTube and can see all that happens at a meeting.

Mr. Michael Absher stated that this is a time for staff appreciation, not just teacher appreciation. He said that our staff members have pulled together during this difficult time and have bent over backwards to get everything done. He acknowledged that this is an extremely hard time for our seniors and applauded the administration for the unique ways they have found to honor this group of students.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt stated that she is beyond overwhelmed at what her kids are doing with remote learning. She said the teachers have been amazing and are working so hard to keep their students engaged. Teachers have been so supportive throughout this time. She added that it has been amazing to see the daily updates containing the number of student meals provided within our school communities. Kudos, to all.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED BUDGET

NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn read a letter from Lauren Wilkie, a student at East Henderson High School, requesting the Board to reconsider the current graduation plans for June 5, 2020.

Mr. Rick Wood read an email from Angela Wilson, requesting the Board reconsider the current graduation plans for June 5, 2020.

Ms. Dot Case read an email from Heather Lance, requesting the Board reconsider the current graduation plans for June 5, 2020.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt read an email from Karen (no last name provided), requesting the Board reconsider the current graduation plans for June 5, 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented in Closed Session. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mr. Absher, yes;

Mr. Wood, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

A. Meeting Schedule

1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [*Monday, June 8, 2020, 6:30 p.m., (Boardroom)*]
2. HCBPE End of Year Matters Business Meeting [*Tuesday, June 30, 2020, 1:00p.m.,(Boardroom)*]

B. Minutes

1. March 4, 2020 (*School Visit, Hendersonville Middle School*)
2. March 9, 2020 (*Regular Business Meeting*)
3. March 16, 2020 [*Special Called Meeting - HCPS Response to Coronavirus(COVID-19)*]
4. April 2, 2020 (*Emergency Business Meeting –Waiver for Policy 4400 Attendance*)

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

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

E. Budget Amendment

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. APPROVAL – INSTITUTE FOR TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CONTRACT

Dr. John Bryant stated this request is for an Integrated Planning for School and Community (IPSAC) study. He added that the Henderson County Public School staff seek to engage the Institute of Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) to conduct the IPSAC and Land Use study in the Fall of 2020. ITRE provides a service to analyze land use within the school system. They provide a 10-year proposal, of what you might see in the community in the future. The results and summary findings of this long-range planning study will be formally presented to the Board of Education upon completion. The cost of the IPSAC study is \$30,000. Dr. Bryant added that this is a critical step in our capital planning process for the future, especially now with some of our schools already at full capacity. Mr. Blair Craven and Mr. Rick Wood agreed that this is a great use of funds. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt asked how this study will be funded? Dr. Bryant stated that some of our school roofing projects came in under budget and those funds would be repurposed for this request.

Mr. Craven asked for a motion on the request. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the ITRE contract to conduct an IPSAC study as presented. Mr. Michael Absher seconded. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

B. APPROVAL – SCHOOL LUNCH RATE INCREASE

Dr. John Bryant stated that based on the increased operational and food costs, the Child Nutrition program is requesting a \$.10 increase for elementary and secondary regular lunch prices. Elementary and regular secondary lunch prices will increase from \$2.40 to \$2.50 and \$2.65 to \$2.75 respectively. Secondary school mega meal lunch prices will increase by \$.15 from \$3.10 to \$3.25. Dr. Bryant reiterated that these changes will only affect students who pay regular meal prices and there will be no change to reduced or free meal students. Dr. Bryant said that there will be no change to teacher meal prices and added that the last price increase was four years ago.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve meal price increases for the 2020-2021 school year as presented. Mr. Rick Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mr. Absher, yes; Mrs. Holt, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

C. APPROVAL– (2020-2021) INTER-UNIT STUDENT TRANSFER AGREEMENTS

Dr. John Bryant presented agreements for Inter-Unit student transfers (Polk County - Saluda section) (Rutherford County - Bat Cave/Lake Lure sections). The attached agreements between Henderson County Public Schools Board of Public Education and Polk County Board of Education and the Rutherford County Board of Education are the same as in previous years under which both parties have cooperated for years.

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion that the Agreements for Inter-Unit Student Transfers Inter-Unit student transfers (Polk County - Saluda section) (Rutherford County - Bat Cave/Lake Lure sections) be approved as presented. Ms. Dot Case seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mrs. Holt, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

D. APPROVAL – AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT FEDERAL PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Dr. Jan King stated that on an annual basis, the School Board is asked to grant authorization for staff to submit applications to receive federal Title I, Part A, (PRC 050), McKinney-Vento, Homeless Education (PRC 026), Title I, Part C, Migrant Education (PRC 051), Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction (PRC 103), Title III, Part A (PRC 104 and 111) funds and Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (PRC 108). She requested the Board grant authorization for staff to submit applications for the federal funds as outlined in the attached request.

Mr. Jay Egolf made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education grant staff the authorization to submit federal funding applications as outlined in the request. Mr. Michael Absher seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mrs. Holt, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

E. APPROVAL – (2020-2021) COUNTY APPROPRIATION REQUEST

Superintendent Bo Caldwell stated that per discussion at the May 7, 2020 Board workshop, \$400,000 has been designated in Capital Outlay toward the school re-entry plan for unknown costs associated with the COVID-19 reopening of our school buildings. Mr. Caldwell said the leadership team has provided an updated list of requests, which are ranked in order of importance, for board consideration. Mr. Caldwell asked Dr. Bryant to discuss the budget lines for the maintenance and safety enhancement request.

Dr. John Bryant presented the Capital Outlay request totaling \$1,900,000 and stated that the \$4,670,000 received last year from the County Commissioners for [Maintenance, Repairs, Technology, Safety(MRTS)] is on hold due to the COVID-19 emergency closures throughout Henderson County. He stated that the Capital Outlay projects requested have been prioritized per the discussion at the May 7, 2020 School Board workshop. Dr. Bryant shared that \$1,500,000 is designated for Capital Outlay projects plus \$400,000 for our re-entry plan relating to COVID-19. The remaining items are listed in order of importance. Dr. Bryant added that items now listed in red, the lighting and audio system replacements at West Henderson High and East Henderson High, originally presented during the workshop, as well as the installation of lighting systems on the softball and baseball fields at North Henderson High School, are now on hold per board request until the MRTS funds are released from the County Commissioners. Dr. Bryant also presented board members with a list of alternative projects for consideration, if the money from the County Commissioners is not released. Dr. Bryant stated per Mr. Craven's direction, the priority will be to address the annual maintenance needs such as urgent roofing needs. Board members were asked to review the line items on the appropriation request for further discussion at a later date.

Mrs. Holt made it clear that the Arts and Athletics are very important to the board but school safety

enhancements must take priority as we work to ensure student safety. She feels funds that were presented for these projects should go toward the safety enhancements at Upward Elementary and Rugby Middle school at this time. Mrs. Holt asked about the proposed security cameras and what *Phase I Installation* will involve? Dr. Bryant responded that Phase I of the security camera funding is included in the School Safety and Security line item. Phase I will create the infrastructure on which a fully integrated camera system can be installed across our system in the future. Phase II expands the camera systems across our schools. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn clarified that the County has put budgeted monies on hold that were specifically designated for safety enhancements to the entrances at Rugby Middle and Upward Elementary Schools. She continued, since the Commissioners have put a temporary hold on that money, we must now move and adjust funding for proposed projects to cover the safety updates at Rugby and Upward Schools. Mrs. Corn stated that we are counting on the County to release that money and when they do, we should be able to move ahead on those projects. Dr. Bryant said, that is correct. Dr. Bryant stated that the Board can decide to allocate the dollars to the projects they feel take priority regardless of the list presented. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt stated the commissioners are working well with us now and they have been amazing to work with; the current funding hold is only due to the COVID-19 emergency. Mr. Blair Craven stated the approval request today for \$30,828,000 will be sent to the County Commissioners for their consideration and then the School Board will then decide which projects will be funded.

Mr. Bernie Sochia stated that the only change made to the May 7, 2020 board workshop request, is moving the \$400,000 to Capital Outlay for COVID-19 re-entry plans. Projects have been prioritized but the funding amounts remained the same.

Mr. Sochia recapped that the attached “2020-2021 County Appropriation Request” is the summary of the Budget Workshop held on May 7, 2020. Although the plan was reviewed by the Henderson County Board of Public Education at the workshop, no action was taken at that time. Mr. Sochia stated the “2020-2021 County Appropriation Request” is now presented for Board approval. Upon approval, the “2020-2021 County Appropriation Request” for \$30,828,000 will be forwarded to the Henderson County Board of County Commissioners for consideration and funding of the Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Funds. Mr. Blair Craven called for motion from the board.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the 2020-2021 County Appropriation Request as presented. Mr. Michael Absher seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mrs. Holt, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

F. APPROVAL – (2019-2020) AUDIT CONTRACT

Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer, presented the 2019-2020 Audit Contract request with Carland and Andersen. He stated that in accordance with Board Policy #505, “Selection and Retention of Auditor”, the contract for the HCPS audit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020 is presented for approval. The State Treasurer’s recommendations for the selection of the auditor include the following criteria: a.) an understanding of the governmental unit’s needs, b.) the approach and methodology, c.) qualifications in governmental auditing, d.) the experience of the audit firm, and e.) the cost of the audit. The history of Carland and Andersen’s service as auditor for Henderson County Public Schools has been invaluable, and the continuity provided by Carland and Andersen is essential. They continue to assist the Finance Department and the individual school bookkeepers on an ad hoc basis, with no additional fees. As to the issue of qualifications and experience, Carland and Andersen currently serves as the auditor for the following governmental/nonprofit entities: School Boards: Transylvania County Schools and Madison County Schools Towns/Municipalities: Rosman, Tryon and Columbus ABC Boards: Hendersonville, Laurel Park, Brevard, Columbus, Highlands and Tryon Foundations: Henderson County Education Foundation.

Mr. Sochia continued by saying, in North Carolina, accounting firms performing audits are required to

have a peer review every three years. Carland and Andersen's last peer review was conducted in November 2018 by the Raleigh firm of Batchelor, Tillery & Roberts, LLP., and Carland and Andersen received a peer review rating of pass (firms can receive a rating of pass, pass with deficiency(ies), or fail). Although not the primary basis for the recommendation that they be awarded the contract, Carland and Andersen has agreed to hold their audit fee at the same amount of \$30,000.

Board members agreed that Carland and Andersen is a quality firm and they continue to do an excellent job for the Henderson County Board of Education.

Mr. Jay Egolf made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the "Contract to Audit Accounts" between the Henderson County Board of Public Education and Carland and Andersen, Inc. for the period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. Mr. Rick Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Absher, yes; Mrs. Holt, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

G. APPROVAL – NORTH CAROLINA LOTTERY APPLICATION

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the quarterly North Carolina Lottery Application for approval. He stated that the attached Public-School Building Capital Fund/N. C. Education Lottery Application is to request funds currently available (\$236,873.04) to pay debt service on the 2008 Installment Financing Contract debt issue for the Hillandale and Mills River Elementary School construction projects. All funds received from the N. C. Education Lottery are currently being used for debt service on these school building projects.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Public-School Building Capital Fund/North Carolina Education Lottery Application as presented. Mr. Michael Absher seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

SPRING 2020 POLICY UPDATES FROM THE N.C. SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (COVID-19)

Dr. John Bryant stated that the Spring Updates from the N.C. School Boards Association (COVID-19), specifically address 5 current policies that require updates due to the COVID-19 Pandemic school closures and its affects. He said one new policy concerning Teleworking will be presented for approval.

H. APPROVAL – POLICY 2302 REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

This policy update provides more flexibility on how board members can remote in and attend board meetings. In subsection A.2.a, adds the need for individual board members to participate electronically due to quarantine, isolation, or stay-at-home order. It adds a new subsection A.2.i to address remote participation where in-person attendance would violate a state or local emergency declaration. The policy also adds a new Section D regarding fully electronic meetings in the event of emergency, such as during the current COVID-19 stay-at-home order.

I. APPROVAL – POLICY 4230 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES – STUDENTS

This policy update provides more explicit information regarding our responsibilities under FERPA, proper lines of communication for reporting and more direction on sharing staff information during a crisis. This policy has been extensively revised to:

- Broaden its focus beyond students having HIV infection/AIDS;
- Better distinguish between requirements related to reportable communicable diseases and those that are not reportable;
- Incorporate FERPA considerations into reporting requirements and information sharing between school officials;
- Incorporate legally required procedures for students having hepatitis B infection;

- Add a new Section F to address attendance of students with communicable diseases other than HIV/AIDS/hepatitis B; and
- Add a new Section G to address other control measures, including decisions regarding school closures.

J. APPROVAL – POLICY 5050 EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

This update adds members of the board to the list of persons to be notified in the event of an emergency closing and adds a new paragraph to require the superintendent to notify members of the board before announcing an emergency closing for a definite period exceeding one week and to consult with board members in deciding to close schools for an indefinite period that is anticipated to exceed one week.

K. APPROVAL – POLICY 7503 TELEWORKING (NEW)

This is an optional new policy authorizing employees to work from home or at another alternative work location (“teleworking”) in certain circumstances and under certain conditions.

- Section A provides relevant definitions of terms used in the policy.
- Section B details the authority of the board or superintendent to require or permit employees to telework in emergency situations.
- Section C addresses teleworking on a permissive basis. This section details who approves these teleworking arrangements and under what circumstances and provide for the termination of such arrangements.
- Section D explains when employees will and will not be permitted to telework and what is required of employees prior to and during teleworking.
- Section E addresses how teleworking arrangements will be made with employees who require ADA accommodations.

L. APPROVAL – POLICY 7560 PERMITTED SALARY DEDUCTIONS FOR ABSENCES AND DISCIPLINE OF CERTAIN EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

- Modifies the policy title to be more reflective of the policy content.
- Clarifies the group of exempt employees to whom the policy applies, i.e., exempt employees who are subject to the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Substantially revises Section A to clarify the deductions from the salary of exempt employees that are authorized and under what circumstances such deductions will or can be made.

M. APPROVAL – POLICY 7620 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

- Revises introductory paragraph for clarity.
- Removes extraneous language in items 8, 12, and 13.
- Adds a new provision to authorize deductions to recoup advancement or overpayment of wages.
- Replaces “personnel office” with “superintendent or designee” in the last paragraph.

Board members discussed each policy when presented for first reading. Mr. Blair Craven opened the floor for a motion to approve the policies as presented.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn asked for more clarification on the new Teleworking policy, Policy 7503. Mrs. Corn feels the home requirements are ambiguous at best and feels teacher monitoring and assessment could cause future problems. Mrs. Corn asked for more clarification to the verbiage within the policy. Superintendent Bo Caldwell asked board attorney, Dean Shatley, to address questions on Policy 7503 since this is a new policy presented for approval. Attorney Dean Shatley stated that most work places that allow work from home have a strict telework policy that establish strict work from home expectations between the employer and employees. Mr. Shatley stated that such a contract often states

the employee will follow guidelines from their employee, which could include no childcare at home while the employee is teleworking. He acknowledged that right now we are in a different situation under the Stay at Home order, we all may have kids at home to take care of as we are working from home. He continued, Item #4 denotes a safe location, free from distraction, which basically asks the employee to designate a workspace in the home for work only. Item # 7 is the expectation that the teleworker adheres to the same policies and procedures as if they were at their typical workplace. Item #8 states that we simply cannot police telework actions as we do while they are working in the school environment, but we can assess performance and whether or not the employee is getting their job done and if they are being productive.

Mrs. Corn stated that she could see from a teacher's and principal's point of view, observations and assessments could be an issue. Mrs. Corn feels we need to be careful of the verbiage we use with our staff members when we are in an emergency situation. Dr. Bryant stated that administrators can join the Zoom meeting, Google Meet, etc. and be a part of the teacher's instruction with students. Ms. Case agreed with Mrs. Corn that the expectations listed in #7 and #8 need to be addressed due to their rigidity.

Dr. John Bryant replied that we have been very explicit about our school day and teacher expectations for student instruction during this COVID-19 school closure and work from home period. He stated that teachers have been given parameters on what the school day is and what they are expected to do daily. Dr. Bryant agreed that this policy will continue to evolve. He also reiterated that the Board could terminate any long-term staff telework approval if they so choose. Mr. Blair Craven agreed that Policy 7503, Teleworking, should be tabled until a later date and asked Dr. John Bryant to follow up with Mrs. Corn's concerns.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion to table Policy 7503, Teleworking until a later date for more discussion and clarification. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mr. Egolf, yes; Mr. Absher, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion to approve policy agenda items: H, I, J, L and M as presented for first reading. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mrs. Holt, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

A. COVID-19 LEARN FROM HOME UPDATE

Dr. Jan King, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated that our emergency remote instructional delivery began on March 20, 2020. She stated that our HCPS family did a wonderful job stepping up to the plate for such a quick implementation of the remote learning plan. Dr. King said that she is pleased overall with the rollout and that our staff members rose to the occasion. She gave kudos to the Technology Department and school level Media Specialists for their work preparing the Chromebooks for student delivery saying to date we have loaned out over 7000 Chromebooks to students for home use. Dr. King acknowledged that teacher readiness levels for remote learning were very different across the board, with some teachers jumping right in to begin online instruction and for others, it took a bit of adjustment. Dr. King stated that our families have been amazing learning partners throughout our Learn from Home initiative. Families have been involved with student instruction, material pick up/drop off, helping with paper and pencil student assignments and so many other vital areas of support for their children. Dr. King praised our Child Nutrition Department and Child Care Services employees for their amazing work. Child Nutrition workers are preparing over 6400 meals daily for our communities and Child Care employees are still working to provide services for our teachers and front-line emergency care workers in our community. Dr. King stated that the State Board of Education has provided specific guidance on all grading related to the COVID-19 remote learning requirements and she continues to work with our teachers and administrators to provide the latest updates from the state for their review and implementation. Dr. King said our next steps are to prioritize our end of the

year requirements. Teachers and counselors are working with the senior class to ensure they meet the goals of on-time course completion and graduation requirements. She added that teacher communication with students and parents is our top priority as teachers strive to support the whole child while providing academic feedback for the year. *Learn from Home* will continue until June 5, 2020. Dr. King added that we must submit a Remote Learning Plan to the State Board of Education in July and that the leadership team has already began looking at student re-entry considerations for August, 2020.

B. GENERAL ASSEMBLY COVID-19 UPDATES

Superintendent Bo Caldwell provided a brief summary on some of the various updates that have occurred in the North Carolina General Assembly in April and May:

COVID-19 Funding - \$231.6 million for the following key purposes:

Child nutrition = \$75 million; Summer learning = \$70 million; Remote learning, including devices and other support = \$56.5 million; Exceptional Children = \$15 million; Mental health = \$10 million; Cybersecurity = \$4.5 million; Residential Schools = \$600,000.

TESTING WAIVERS: Clarifies or modifies various testing requirements, including EOGs, EOCs, the ACT, diagnostic and formative assessments for grades K-3, and WorkKeys.

SCHOOL REPORT CARD WAIVERS: Waives the requirements for calculation and display of school report cards.

ADVANCED MATH PLACEMENT MODIFICATIONS: Requires initial math placement for the 2020-2021 school year to be consistent with local policies, in consultation with the student's 2019-2020 math teacher. Students who are not initially placed in advanced math can opt to take the 2019-2020 end-of-grade or end-of-course test, and if they score at the highest level on the test, must be placed in advanced math for the 2020-2021 school year.

READ TO ACHIEVE WAIVERS: Third Grade Retention Determination: Allows principals to make third grade promotion decisions in the same manner as for other grades.

Fourth Grade Reading Assessment: Requires a reading assessment to be administered to students entering fourth grade in 2020-2021 within 10 days of the start of the school year.

Reporting Requirements: Waives online posting of K-3 reading outcomes.

CPR GRADUATION REQUIREMENT: Waives the statutory CPR graduation requirement for students who cannot complete it due to the closure of schools for in-person instruction, but are otherwise qualified to graduate.

2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR AND ATTENDANCE MODIFICATIONS: Remote Instruction: Allows remote instruction to satisfy the statutory instructional time requirement.

Student Attendance Enforcement for 2019-2020: Waives attendance enforcement requirements beginning March 16, 2020 for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Remote Instruction Plans: Directs public school units to develop Remote Instruction Plans for the 2020-2021 school year and submit the Plans to the SBE by July 20, 2020.

The Plans must include information as to how districts will deliver quality remote instruction to all students in the 2020-2021 school year as well as information as to how to train teachers, support students and families, and engage with community stakeholders.

Calendar requirements:

185 or 1025 hours of instruction that includes: (i) 5 remote instruction days in accordance with the remote instruction plan; (ii) an additional 5 instruction days that can only be satisfied by individually separate and distinct full instruction days, not by hours.

(i) opening date for students of August 17, 2020; (ii) closing date for students no later than June 11, 2021; (iii) no remote instruction days scheduled prior to August 24, 2020;

Remote instruction days may be scheduled for use as teacher workdays.

Per legislation signed by Governor Roy Cooper on May 4 that mandates specific school calendar guidelines for the upcoming year, the 2020-21 traditional calendar for HCPS is currently being revised and will be presented to the Board of Public Education for consideration and approval at its June 8, 2020 board meeting.

C. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Dr. John Bryant provided an update for the ongoing construction projects throughout the district. He stated that if there were a silver lining to our school buildings being closed due to COVID-19, it would be that our construction projects have switched into high gear. We have been able to work on many different projects full force, which couldn't happen with students on campus. Dr. Bryant stated that the following operations are underway at Hendersonville High School: demo of old gym is nearly completed; foundation work is ongoing at New Building (A), Band, Chorus, and Shop, (D) and Aux Gym, (C); and the erection of scaffolding is ongoing around the Stillwell Building for the brick masonry repointing (brick and mortar repair), which is scheduled to begin on May 18, 2020. Dr. Bryant said at Edneyville Elementary school, curb and gutter installations, sidewalk canopy and parking lot light installations are underway. The HVAC replacement projects, demolition of ceiling tiles and grids and the installation of rooftop HVAC units, at Rugby Middle and Flat Rock Middle schools, is complete. He added, the demolition of ductwork and air handlers; installation of Mini-Split units; and installation of ceiling grids continue at both of the middle schools. Dr. Bryant added that the resurfacing of the West Henderson High and North Henderson High tennis courts is well underway and the projects should be completed by the end of May, 2020. Dr. Bryant said that the softball lighting projects at West Henderson and East Henderson High Schools is nearly complete and that we are only waiting for Duke Power to finalize connections. Dr. Bryant stated that several paving projects that were under contract before the COVID-19 closures will be completed at West Henderson, East Henderson and Flat Rock Middle schools in May and June.

Dr. Bryant also presented an update on current school safety projects that are underway while students are not on campus. School Intercom upgrades have been completed at Apple Valley Middle School, Flat Rock Middle School, North Henderson High School and Sugarloaf Elementary School.

Access Control installations and updates for outer doors continue as listed:

> New and Phase II

- Hendersonville Middle School - Phase II Perimeter Doors - Complete
- Rugby Middle School - Perimeter Doors - Complete
- Flat Rock Middle School - Perimeter Doors - Complete
- Apple Valley Middle School - Phase II Perimeter Doors - Complete

> Upgrades

- Hillandale Elementary - In Progress
- Mills River Elementary - In Progress

> New

- Glenn Marlow Elementary - In Progress
- Etowah Elementary - In Progress

Security Camera Upgrades:

> Flat Rock Middle and Rugby Middle Schools

- Phase I - Contracted MB Haynes to install new camera cabling while ceiling grids are exposed.
- Phase II - Increase interior and exterior camera coverage - (24 Cameras with 27 viewing angles)

Dr. Bryant stated there are two school safety projects on hold due to the Budget restrictions from the County Commissioners. They are the Upward Elementary Main Entrance Renovation and the Rugby

Middle Main Entrance/Office Renovation. Dr. Bryant stated that these projects were included in the \$4,670,760 million dollars budgeted last year from the county commissioners. This 'pot of money' is now frozen due to the COVID-19 closures across Henderson County which have greatly affected revenues. Dr. Bryant added, when those funds are released by the commissioners, these projects should continue as planned.

D. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the following financial statement containing:

1. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2019-20 fiscal year as of April 30, 2020: Revenues total \$29,905,931 and expenditures total \$22,969,473. The expenditures are now at 73.8% of the current combined budgets for both funds. This is down from 75.1% in the prior year. Revenue from Fines and Forfeitures is coming in lower than projected for the year, and Federal Medicaid revenue is scheduled for the current year, but we have yet to receive most of it.
2. Results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund as of March 31, 2020: \$1,649,574 in revenues have been received. \$1,236,313 has been paid on the current capital projects, leaving \$405,635 in project balances as shown in the capital projects list.
3. Results of operations for the Enterprise Fund as of March 31, 2020:
 - a. The Child Nutrition Program currently shows expenditures for the year exceeding revenues by \$375,353; up from \$88,348 at the end of second quarter. The main reason for the shift is that for March, expenditures remained relatively constant, but revenue was down \$250,000 from a normal month due to school closing. Later in the year, eligible expenditures will be moved from the School Nutrition books to State and Local to match with COVID revenue to be received for the purpose of feeding children during this unprecedented season.
 - b. The Child Care Program currently shows expenditures for the year exceeding revenues by \$53,989; which is up from \$13,785 at the end of second quarter. Again, the school closure had an impact here as well. While revenues dropped \$12,000 in March alone, expenditures actually went up as centers increased their hours for school closure at no cost to families. Eligible expenditures from here too will get moved to where the COVID funding will be received in State as needed after DHHS funding is reconciled at the end of the year.

E. COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS ON SCHOOL FLEX CALENDAR

Superintendent Bo Caldwell stated that the State Board of Education has designated August 17, 2020 as the first day of school for the 2020-2021 school year. He stated there are many scenarios being discussed at the state level regarding a Fall re-entry plan for all students and staff but there is no final plan at this time. Mr. Caldwell stated one idea being circulated at the state level includes year-round schools, scheduled to begin in July, 2020, would begin their instruction on a remote learning platform. Mr. Caldwell emphasized that the social and emotional needs of our students are as important as their academic needs, as we strive to serve the whole child. Mr. Caldwell is not in agreement with kindergarteners beginning school online and missing the face to face interactions with their teachers and classmates. Mr. Caldwell feels this would be detrimental to our students to begin their school careers in this manner. Mr. Blair Craven agreed. Mr. Craven stated that he has a student in the year-round school and he does not want students to begin the new year via remote learning. Mr. Craven shared that there are so many re-entry questions that will not be answered by July, 2020. Mr. Craven stated that he would like the Board to eliminate the July 9, 2020 start date for the Henderson County Flex Calendar schools, Bruce Drysdale Elementary and Hendersonville Elementary School, and move these two schools to the Traditional School Calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. The Flex Calendar schools would begin school on August 17, 2020 and follow the Traditional Calendar for one year. Flex Schools would return to their regular flex schedule for the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Craven acknowledged this would not be a popular decision among the year-round school parents and students and stated the safety and well-being of our students has to come first. Board members discussed consequences of the move and all

members felt this was the best option considering the circumstances. Mr. Absher asked how teachers would be affected? Mr. Caldwell stated that teacher pay would not be affected, teacher contracts would not change, and teachers would not lose money switching to the traditional schedule. Superintendent Bo Caldwell and Board members agreed that a prompt decision on this matter was critical and needed to be made sooner than later. Mr. Caldwell stated that he had conversations regarding this matter with both principals, Mr. Eric Gash (BDS) and Mrs. Kerry Stewart (HES), and they both agreed that beginning the school year virtually in July is a bad option. Mr. Craven asked if any board member was against the idea and several replied they were totally against our students starting the 2020-2021 school year virtually. Mr. Craven asked for a motion to move the Flex Calendar schools to the Traditional Calendar for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion to move the start date of the Flex Calendar Schools to August 17, 2020, and to have these two schools follow the Traditional School Calendar for the 2020-2021 school year only. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Mrs. Holt, yes; Mr. Wood, yes; Mrs. Corn, yes; Ms. Case, yes; Mr. Craven, yes. (*Unanimously approved.*)

Mr. Craven instructed Superintendent Bo Caldwell to release the results of this board decision as soon as possible via all traditional means.

F. HCPS END OF YEAR EVENTS UPDATE

Superintendent Bo Caldwell began by stating this year's Education Celebration will be held virtually on Thursday, May 14th at 7:00 pm; he invited all board members to join the virtual celebration. He thanked Mrs. Summer Stipe, Director of the Henderson County Education Foundation, for her tireless work in arranging this celebration. Mr. Caldwell stated that our Henderson County Teacher of the Year nominees will be recognized the week of May 18, 2020 with yard signs for each teacher and gift baskets provided by our community partners at the Henderson County Chamber of Commerce. The District Teacher of the Year winner will be announced on Friday, May 22, 2020. Mr. Caldwell stated that Mr. Scott Rhodes is preparing the Top Scholars Video in celebration of their achievements. The Top Scholars Video will be released on June 5, 2020 along with the graduation videos.

GRADUATION

Mr. Caldwell discussed the arrangements for senior graduation programs scheduled for June 5, 2020. He stated that at this time, due to Governor Roy Cooper's social distancing mandates, we plan to have a drive-up diploma procession at each school. Students and family members will arrive on campus, remain in their car to follow a predesignated route and pick up their diplomas. Each school will have a decorated space where the graduate can exit their vehicle and walk across a predetermined area to pick up their diploma. Principals and administrators will be there to declare them graduates and ask them to ceremonially move their tassel. Students can pause at the decorated area for family photos then return to the vehicle for departure. Mr. Caldwell added, we have hired a professional company, *Rhodes Branding*, to create graduation videos for each school. Each video will include student speakers, administrative speeches and student recognitions by name and photo. These videos will be released on social media on June 5, 2020 at the conclusion of the drive-up processions.

Mr. Caldwell stated that this is the graduation plan, as of today. He reiterated, if Governor Cooper were to relax group gathering restrictions by June 1, 2020, and those restrictions would accommodate three hundred people or more in one space, he is open to the possibility of a typical graduation ceremony. He added, for now this is our best option as we continue to follow the social distancing mandates from the governor and strive to keep our graduates safe.

Mr. Blair Craven stated that School Board members have not forgotten about our seniors and that their hearts go out to each senior for the many changes they have endured this year. Mr. Craven applauded Superintendent Caldwell for the current graduation plan and stated if schools want to have a celebration

later in the summer for these students when/if restrictions are removed, they should feel free to do so. Mr. Craven feels those additional celebrations should take place prior to August 17, 2020, when the new school year begins.

Mr. Rick Wood asked if students would be required to wear their cap and gown. Mr. Caldwell replied, no, we want these children to be able to walk regardless of how they come dressed. Mr. Caldwell stated that many systems are postponing to a later date but he is unsure how many students would still be in town to attend a graduation ceremony in August. Mr. Wood suggested that we could hold the June 5, 2020 drive-up ceremony but have each school schedule their own summer celebration when appropriate.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt feels each county high school should follow the same plan if they schedule additional summer celebrations. She suggested having a ceremony with only staff and students in attendance, with parents and friends viewing from home. Mrs. Holt stated that she might know of a location that a traditional graduation ceremony could occur in June and is willing to discuss when appropriate. Mrs. Holt feels parents would need to take responsibility for their children's actions to ensure they were being safe while attending and possibly have parents sign off on a waiver for their child to attend. Mrs. Corn disagreed saying the school system could still be liable.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn stated that the same restrictions placed on the start of the Flex Calendar in July would apply to group graduation celebrations. She believes as with any graduation, the School Board has an obligation to make sure our students are safe and they are following the law. She feels the large group graduations at this time are not an option.

Mr. Craven feels the June 5, 2020 graduation plan is sufficient and asked if board members agreed?

Mrs. Corn agrees with the June 5th plan, she watched a video of another system graduating as we plan and she felt it was really pretty cool.

Mr. Absher feels that social distancing guidelines will restrict us for traditional graduation ceremonies at this time. After speaking with teachers at North Henderson and hearing more details about their plan, he agrees with the plan presented for June 5, 2020.

Ms. Dot Case feels we need to hold the June 5th ceremony but says it is appealing to know the schools could plan a future celebration or reunion event tied to a football game or something to celebrate these students, when restrictions are eased.

Mr. Jay Egolf feels the June 5th graduation for students is a good plan and feels we should not delay graduation until later, as some parents and students have suggested. He is concerned about liability issues in conjunction with traditional ceremonies and related illnesses that could occur after the gatherings. Mr. Egolf feels students would not return in late July or August for the ceremony due to vacations, jobs, military obligations and other summer commitments. Mr. Egolf feels each school should have a celebration as they can. Mr. Egolf stated that these students have missed so much of their senior year and their school life has been taken away from them during this closure. He feels sad for the students and all of the activities they have missed. He feels the drive up and walk across graduation suggestion could create some normalcy and this is the best we can do for now.

Mr. Michael Absher stated that Western Carolina University is planning a second graduation in December for their graduates and suggested we could hold the June 5th event and plan another graduation celebration in December as well.

Mr. Caldwell stated he would like to go ahead with the June 5th graduation plan saying we will know more after the May 22, 2020, scheduled Governor's update. He added many counties are delaying their graduations until August but they have no assurances what restrictions could still be in place at that time. Mr. Caldwell agreed that all students want the opportunity to graduate with their peers but emphasized these changes are due to the Governor's restrictions not Henderson County School's restrictions. Mr.

Caldwell added, if something changes in group gatherings as we move into Governor Cooper's Phase II for reopening, we could still adjust the graduation plan and include celebrations at a later date.

Mr. Absher expressed his agreement with a public comment letter asking the Board to delay graduation until July or August sitting, if restrictions are still in place then, we hold the virtual ceremonies.

Superintendent Caldwell asked if a state mandated decision allowing mass gatherings for a group of 300+ people comes about before June 5, 2020, could he come back to the Board for approval to change the current plan?

Board members replied, absolutely.

Mr. Caldwell clarified that it was the board's decision to proceed with the June 5, 2020 graduations as planned and added that the board agrees with additional student celebrations when allowed. Mr. Craven asked that the information be released for our students and families.

Mrs. Holt stated if we have the opportunity to get these kids together for a ceremony and we don't do it, we are doing them a disservice.

Mr. Caldwell stated that he would bring any new options to the board as they are received.

Mrs. Corn suggested that we don't call it a 'drive-through' or 'drive-by' ceremony. Possibly call it an Individual Graduation Ceremony or something else. She is confident that our principals will make this a special event for our seniors.

Mr. Absher asked that we release more details to the public so they could better understand the plan.

Mr. Blair Craven feels we should go ahead with the graduation plans as presented for June 5, 2020 and then plan to celebrate our seniors when allowed by law. He feels the celebrations should happen before August 17, 2020.

G. GENERAL OPERATIONS

Superintendent Bo Caldwell said he has never been prouder of his staff and teachers with how hard they are working. He feels they are all heroes. Mr. Caldwell stated it is his honor and privilege to serve as superintendent.

H. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Mary Louise Corn moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Rick Wood. *(Unanimously approved at 5:50 pm.)*