

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

August 10, 2020

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 10, 2020, beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the August 10, 2020 regular business meeting was held in accordance with approved, safety thresholds for public gatherings established by local health officials and Governor Roy Cooper. Capacity for the public/staff to attend was capped at no more than 10 persons. Therefore, no members of the public were allowed into the meeting room. The Board received public comment via email submitted prior to the meeting. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link on the HCPS YouTube channel.

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 approximately 4:10 pm and led all those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Blair Craven acknowledged the receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn moved that the agenda be approved as presented, seconded by Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt. *(Unanimously approved.)*

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Blair Craven stated that he and other board members have received many emails and messages from the community regarding the reentry plan for August, 2020. He believes this is a difficult time for everyone including students, parents, teachers, administrators and especially for our single parents. He asked that the community support one another and he feels we will all get through this together.

BOARD MEMBER OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt echoed Mr. Craven's statement. Mrs. Holt stated that as long as our hospitals are not overwhelmed and our county death rates are not rising, our schools are the safest place for our kids to be. She said the Board is not taking the situation lightly and they all are working to get our kids back in school as soon as possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Two public comment emails were received prior to the meeting and were read aloud by board members. Ms. Hannah Parks shared information on why she feels HCPS should be on the Plan B reentry model to start the 2020 school year.

Ms. Emily Edmunds asked which deciding factors will be used to move the system to Plan B during the year? She feels students are not getting an equitable education through remote learning and asked the board to consider student safety, the dangers of too much screen time and the particular requirements of our Special Needs population.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented in Closed Session. Ms. Dot Case seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved.)*

- A. Meeting Schedule
 - 1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 4:00 p.m., (Boardroom) (Closed Session 3:00 p.m.)]
- B. Minutes – July 20, 2020 (Special Called Business Meeting – HCPS ReEntry Plan)
- C. Personnel (as presented in closed session)
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases (as presented in closed session)

OLD BUSINESS

Dr. John Bryant presented the following Spring Policy Updates(April 2020)for final approval. He stated no changes had been made to the policies since they were approved for first reading.

- A. Approval – Policy 1320/3560, Title I Parent and Family Engagement (Second Reading)(Dr. John Bryant)
- B. Approval – Policy 3460, Graduation Requirements (Second Reading)(Dr. John Bryant)
- C. Approval – Policy 4110, Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (Second Reading)(Dr. John Bryant)
- D. Approval – Policy 7241, Drug and Alcohol Testing of Commercial Motor Vehicle Operators (Second Reading)(Dr. John Bryant)

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Spring policy updates as presented. Mr. Rick Wood seconded. (Unanimously approved.)

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval – Emergency Use of Transportation Funds

Dr. Bryant stated that in order to utilize yellow buses and transportation funds to operate yellow buses to transport meals when schools open for the 2020-2021 school year, three conditions are required:

1. Continuation of the Governor’s Emergency Declaration that activates the General Statute 115C-242(6) for emergency use of yellow school buses; (Note: Executive Order 116 declared the State of Emergency and authorizes the use of yellow school buses for emergency purposes until it is rescinded by the Governor.),
2. Approval of each local Board of Education for emergency use; and
3. Approval of Transportation Funds (PRC-056) for emergency use of transportation funds (PRC-056) to deliver meals to students as school reopens in August.) (Note: This item is still pending; a request has been made to the Office of the Governor to extend the budget flexibility for the use of transportation funds (PRC-056) to deliver meals to students as school reopens in August.)

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the emergency use of Transportation Funds [PRC-056] for the delivery of student meals, when all three conditions required are met. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded. (Unanimously approved.)

TITLE IX SPECIAL POLICY UPDATES (7/28/2020)

Dr. Bryant stated that the North Carolina School Board Association issued a set of special time sensitive policy updates in response to new Title IX regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Education in May. The new regulations go into effect on August 14, 2020, and will require significant modification to the way school officials respond to reports and complaints of sexual harassment. To accommodate these changes and their wide-reaching effect on existing policies, the NCSBA is deleting 2 policies from our model policy manual and adding 6 new policies. They are also updating 4 existing policies and providing a complimentary administrative regulation for board approval.

- B. Approval – Policy 1710-4020-7230, Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law-NEW (First Reading) (Dr. John Bryant) This new policy supersedes, in part, existing policies 1710/4021/7230 and 1720/4015/7225. This policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based on certain characteristics protected by federal law, including race, color, national origin, religion, and disability, but excluding sex. It provides a reporting and investigative process for complaints of policy violations.
- C. Approval – Policy 1720-4030-7235, Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex-NEW (First Reading) (Dr. John Bryant) This new policy is intended to meet the board’s obligation to provide notice of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex. This policy declares the board’s policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex in the programs and activities of the school system.

- D. Approval – Policy 1725-4035-7236, Title IX Sexual Harassment – Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process-NEW (*First Reading*) (Dr. John Bryant) *This new policy supersedes policy 1710/4021/7230, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying, in part. It specifically prohibits sexual harassment as defined by Title IX. This policy is required to comply with the board’s obligation not to discriminate on the basis of sex. It specifically prohibits sexual harassment and provides a reporting process and mandatory response protocol to meet the requirements of federal law as set out in the new Title IX regulations.*
- E. Approval – Policy 1726-4036-7237, Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process-NEW (*First Reading*) (Dr. John Bryant) *This new policy supersedes policy 1720/4015/7225 Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedure, in part. This policy provides a grievance process for resolving formal complaints of sexual harassment in a manner that complies with the requirements of federal law as set out in the new Title IX regulations.*
- F. Approval – Policy 4329-7311, Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited-NEW (*First Reading*) (Dr. John Bryant) *This new policy supersedes policy 1710/4021/7230, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying, in part; and policy 1720/4015/7225, Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedure, in part. This policy satisfies the board’s obligation under G.S. 115C407.16 to have a policy prohibiting bullying and harassing behavior.*
- G. Approval – Policy 7232, Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace-NEW (*First Reading*) (Dr. John Bryant) *This new policy addresses the board’s obligations to provide a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. Previously this information was addressed by policies 1710/4021/7230 and 1720/4015/7225. This policy addresses federal laws that prohibit discrimination in employment, including Title VII.*

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion to waive the first reading for Policies B-G and approve the Special Title IX Policies B-G (from July 28, 2020) as presented. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded. (*Unanimously approved.*)

Dr. Bryant presented two policies for the Board to rescind.

- H. Rescind – Policy 1710/4021/7230, Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying. *This policy has been superseded by new policies 1710/4020/7230, 1720/4030/7235, 1725/4035/7236, 4329/7311, and 7232.*
- I. Rescind – Policy 1720/4015/7225, Discrimination. *This policy has been superseded by new policies 1710/4020/7230, 1726/4036/7237, 4329/7311, and 7232.*

Mr. Michael Absher made a motion to Rescind Policies H-I, from the (July 28, 2020) Title IX Updates as presented. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded. (*Unanimously approved.*)

BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

ReENTRY REPORT

Superintendent Bo Caldwell and members of the Leadership Team presented information on the status of the reentry plan for August 17, 2020. He shared a graphic detailing the significant differences between the Emergency Remote Learning Plan (March-May 2020) and Plan C, *Return to Learn*, our remote learning plan for the 2020-21 school year. Mr. Caldwell and Dr. Jan King discussed the differences in instruction and stated this information was released to the public in July of 2020.

Dr. King stated that the main difference in the two plans is this remote learning through Plan C will consist of live, virtual whole class sessions teaching new content with grades and assessments, instead of primarily reviewing previously learned material.

Students will be assigned to teachers and classes with their peers at their schools, and will attend school remotely and simultaneously with their peers on a half-day online schedule with independent assignments for the afternoon. Daily attendance will be taken and student grading expectations will look similar to in-person expectations.

- Grades K-5: Remote learning will occur from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., following individual teachers’ classroom schedules. Teachers will communicate their classroom schedules with families in early August.
- Grades 6-12: Remote learning will occur from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m., following the school’s in-person half day bell schedule.

Dr. King stated that a student will be considered present for daily attendance during a remote learning day:

- If a student completes their daily assignments, either online or offline; and/or

- If a student has a daily check-in, a two-way communication, with the appropriate teacher(s):
- In grades K-5, homeroom teacher; all other grade levels, each course teacher as scheduled.

Dr. King emphasized that student and parent support will be a main focus as we move into remote learning. The following options are being provided for students and their families: Tech Support: The “Learn from Home Help Desk” has been expanded to offer a dedicated phone line for tech support for students and families in multiple languages. Call 828-435-3480 or email learnfromhome@hcpsnc.org; In-Person Support: During Plan C, students may schedule on-campus tutoring and support by appointment; ESL Family Center: For assistance in Spanish, families can contact the ESL Family Liaison at 828-388-2632.

Dr. King stated that teachers have been given a very specific set of expectations for remote teaching. Principals and administrators will be monitoring classes via *Little SIS (Student Information System)*, where administrators can join virtual classes at any time while in session. Superintendent Caldwell added that anything we implement and design in Plan C will carry over when we move to Plan B, the hybrid instruction model. Mr. Caldwell hopes that we can move to Plan A at some point in the year. Dr. King shared that schools will be offering small group, in-person orientations for grades K, 1, 6, 9. Many schools will be doing drive through *Meet Your Teacher* type events as well. Dr. King said that schools are required to send out information regarding back to school orientations, student schedules, first day of school schedules, child nutrition information and more.

Board members agreed that we need to overcommunicate with our parents and they believe we cannot share too much information regarding the Plan C reentry plan. Board members stressed the importance of getting information out to all of our students and parents and charged the Leadership Team with making it happen.

Mr. Craven asked about our server capabilities and if they are sufficient for all of the students who will be online at the same time? Mr. Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer, stated that his technology department is monitoring the network traffic daily and they should know more in the next two weeks. Mr. Fender believes that what will be required now is less than what we typically use within a school day.

Dr. John Bryant shared information on School Safety for *Return to Learn*. Dr. Bryant stated that Mr. Scott Masington, Director of School Safety, has done a phenomenal job planning for students and staff to return to our facilities. Signage has been designed and installed across the system with reminders of proper hand washing, social distancing, and face covering expectations. Cleaning protocols are updated daily and clear shields have been ordered for installation at all front desk areas. Dr. Bryant said that all schools are receiving the same PPE for staff and students. All staff members have been issued one face covering so far, student face coverings have been ordered. Dr. Bryant added, temperature scanning kiosks have been installed at each school’s main entrance for visitors to use before entering the building and touchless temperature scanners have been purchased for each school to monitor staff and student temperatures as they enter our buildings daily.

Dr. Bryant stated when students come in for orientations, tutoring appointments or extra help from teachers, they will be expected to follow the safety protocols. Students, parents and teachers will have to wear their face covering and follow the social distancing requirements while in the building. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt asked how we are going to handle kids who won’t keep their mask on? Dr. Bryant emphasized that teachers will be reminding students throughout the day of the expectation to keep their mask on, much like they would about proper hygiene items like washing hands, covering your cough, etc. Mr. Caldwell and Dr. Bryant believe face coverings are a health issue, not a disciplinary issue, unless a student becomes defiant to follow the rules. Both stated that staff members must show grace as we work together to meet the state-mandated expectation.

Dr. Bryant said that our School Resource officers are back in schools and our school nurses will return full-time when our students return to school.

Dr. Bryant shared that the *Meals on the Bus* routes are posted on the Return to Learn website. He said the routes will be similar to the March-May closure routes. Mr. Caldwell said that community partners are offering to help with child care and we have posted a list of resources on the Return to Learn website for parents to access. Dr. Bryant added that we will be delivering meals to community spots that are offering child care in order to reach

our students. Mr. Craven asked that the child care information be shared in the media so parents can see the available options.

Dr. Bryant is waiting on information from Raleigh regarding our bus drivers and how funding might be used/diverted to continue their employment while students are learning from home.

Superintendent Bo Caldwell said he's been asked, 'what will it take to transition from Plan C to Plan B?' Mr. Caldwell said that he has formed a think tank comprised of doctors from Pardee Health, Advent Health, Blue Ridge Health, and Mr. Steve Smith, Henderson County Health Director. The group will meet periodically to review the COVID-19 data for Henderson County and assess their comfort level of students returning to school. Mr. Caldwell will bring their recommendations to the Board for review.

Board members asked several questions regarding the curriculum logistics of Return to Learn. Dr. Jan King responded to their questions.

EQUITY FOR ALL REPORT

Superintendent Bo Caldwell stated the Equity Team met on July 16, 2020. The following members were present: Bo Caldwell, John Bryant, Jan King, Scott Rhodes, Tawana Clayton, Eric Gash, Katy Gash, Areli Perez-Nava, Heang Uy and Kathy Johnson. Mr. Caldwell would like to meet with the group again to see if more people would be available to join the conversations as we move forward. Dr. Jan King shared that Nakia McCall from EduConsulting, provided staff development on August 5, 2020, for all administrators and directors. Her presentation centered on *The Culturally Responsive Leader* and challenged us to take a look at ourselves as leaders. Over the summer break, Dr. King asked a group of teachers to review their content area to see where issues of bias may exist within our current curriculum. Dr. King stated she is taking intentional steps to be purposeful in our instruction as we interweave new practices within our existing framework in relation to the national conversations regarding racial bias.

Mr. Craven stated that we need to be aware of the learning gaps within our impoverished communities and we must be purposeful to reach out and help these students during remote learning.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Mr. Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer, said our projected enrollment from the state for 2020-2021 is 13,463 students. As of now, we have 13,218 students enrolled through PowerSchool. Mr. Rhodes stated that our goal is to be within 100 students of this projected number so there will be no reduction in funding. Currently, we are 146 students outside of that number. Mr. Rhodes and school administrators are watching the numbers daily. Mr. Rhodes stated that our Kindergarten enrollment last year at this time was 900 and today we have 881 kindergarten students enrolled. Mr. Rhodes said that we are meeting the K-3 class size mandates from the state.

K-3 LITERACY DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Dr. King presented the Board with a brief update on the State Board of Education's action related to the approved K-3 literacy diagnostic assessments for Read to Achieve implementation. Two years ago, the state had only one approved assessment which was Amplify's mClass product. Last school year, the sole tool provided by the state was Istation. This year, the State Board of Education approved five diagnostic measures and districts are required to select one vendor from the approved list. Approved vendors were: Curriculum Associates (iReady), Istation (ISIP-ER), NWEA (Measures of Academic Progress), Renaissance Learning (STAR) or Amplify (mCLASS). Elementary Education Director Shannon Marlowe led the district process for vendor selection by engaging a team of teacher and administrator representatives from all HCPS elementary schools. The committee voted to use Curriculum Associates' iReady product to provide continuity with platforms since we already use the product for math assessments, consistency with reporting so parents see similar formats for reading and math results, and reduce the need for additional teacher training over the summer - a task that would be difficult given the timeline between the State Board decision and the challenges of COVID. Dr. King praised Ms. Marlowe's leadership during the selection process.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent Administrative Services, presented the construction update. He stated that a tremendous amount of work has been accomplished across the system since March, 2020. He is pleased

with coordination between companies meeting timelines for scheduled work and says they are continuing to accel the timetables on several jobs. Dr. Bryant stated the work at Rugby Middle, Flat Rock Middle and Hendersonville High School will continue as our staff and students return to school. He emphasized that ongoing work should not be disruptive to a student's school day when they return to campus. Dr. Bryant reminded the Board that the Rugby Middle School and Upward Elementary School safety renovations are still on hold until funds can be released from the County.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer, presented the financial report as of June 30, 2020 and July 31, 2020.

1. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2019-20 fiscal year as of June 30, 2020: Revenues total \$30,900,013 or 99.3% of anticipated revenues (total budgeted revenues less appropriated fund balance). Expenditures for the year were \$30,470,538. Year-end payables and receivables are yet to be closed and will be included in the audited trial balance this Fall.

2. Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2020-21 fiscal year as of July 31, 2020: Revenues of \$2,928,548 were received and \$1,076,344 in expenditures were made. The decreased expenditures compared to last year is that the insurance premium invoice was received and paid in July last year and not August.

3. Results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2019-20 fiscal year as of June 30, 2020: Expenditures for the year total \$28,861,926 and revenues received were \$29,051,222. Most of these are non-cash transactions to record the construction of Edneyville Elementary and school bus replacements.

4. Results of operations of the Enterprise Fund for the 2019-20 fiscal year as of June 30, 2020:

a. Child Nutrition had received \$6,158,419 in revenues and had \$6,611,107 in expenditures for the year.

b. Child Care had expenditures totaling \$1,159,082. Revenues prior to final reimbursement were \$1,094,656.

Both Enterprise Funds had abnormal financial operations for the final quarter of the fiscal year. Covid-19 funding was made available under certain conditions which either allowed us to get a new source of funding for the program, or allowed us to move expenditures to State funds. Both programs will be in the same financial position that they were in at the time of closure in March 2020.

Mr. Blair Craven asked for a monthly report on the Child Care program so the Board can monitor their fund balance. Mr. Craven stated the goal of an Enterprise Fund is to be revenue neutral and our goal for the Child Care program is that it become self-sufficient. Mr. Blair Craven and Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt expressed concerns about our Child Care program and its future funding sources.

GENERAL OPERATIONS

Superintendent Bo Caldwell stated it is his honor and privilege to serve as Superintendent for Henderson County Public Schools.

Mr. Rick Wood acknowledged County Commissioner, Ms. Rebecca McCall for her attendance at the meeting and thanked her for her support.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Michael Absher. *(Unanimously approved at 6:20 pm.)*

Minutes approved: September 8, 2020