

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

April 14, 2025

The Henderson County Board of Public Education held a meeting on Monday, April 14, 2025 beginning at 4:00 pm, at 414 4th Avenue West, Hendersonville, NC. The meeting was accessible to the public via a livestream link at, <http://hcpsnc.org/live>.

Board Members Present: Dr. Kathy Revis, Chairperson; Robert Bridges, Vice Chairperson; Beth Campbell; Blair Craven; Shelia Dale; Amy Holt; Alyssa Norman

Administrative Staff Present: Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent; Shannon Marlowe, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer; Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer

Attorney Present: John Henning
Board Clerk: Tawana Clayton

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dr. Kathy Revis called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. Dr. Revis requested everyone present to stand as the West Henderson High School Army JROTC presented the colors. Dr. Revis led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

Dr. Kathy Revis asked those present to remain standing and take a moment of silent reflection.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Dr. Kathy Revis acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Alyssa Norman. (*Unanimously approved.*)

STAFF/STUDENT RECOGNITION

Flat Rock Middle School Orchestra

Orchestra Teacher: Ms. Jennie Quinn

Flat Rock Middle School's 7th and 8th grade orchestra students earned Superior Ratings at the 2025 Music Performance Adjudication (MPA) held at East Henderson High School. MPA is the orchestra's equivalent of an end-of-grade assessment, where students perform prepared pieces for a panel of judges—and 8th graders also face the added challenge of sight-reading. In addition to preparing her students, Mrs. Quinn also served as the site coordinator for this state event.

Hendersonville High School

HHS Mock Trial Team

Teacher: Ms. Shelby Lewis

The Hendersonville High School Red Team earned first place at the Hickory Mock Trial Competition in February, advancing to the State Mock Trial Tournament held March 14–15 at Campbell Law School in Raleigh.

Team Members: Lilliam Middlebrook, Evelyn Middlebrook, Brendan Henson, Ryleigh Ramsey, Emma McBeath, Lauren Hefner, Liv Bridges, Sofia Hernandez Zamora, Tobin DeGuzman

At the state competition: Brendan Henson was awarded Best Witness and Lillian Middlebrook was awarded Best Attorney

North Henderson High School

NHHS DECA

Teacher: Mr. Christopher Decker

James Mondin earned a top 10 test score and scored 99 and 98 on his role plays in Sports Event Marketing, leading to a 2nd place overall finish out of 245 students in North Carolina. He will compete at the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Orlando, Florida.

Citlally Diaz-Mar achieved a top 10 overall test score and a 98 on her role play in Principles of Marketing, finishing 10th place overall out of 300 students in North Carolina.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB North Carolina Youth of the Year

Citlally Diaz-Mar was named the 2025 North Carolina Youth of the Year and will represent the state at the Southeast Regional competition in Atlanta.

NHHS All-State Band

Student: William Sigmon

Band Director: Mr. Steve Sigmon

William Sigmon, a freshman, earned 7th place in the state on trombone at the All-State Honors Band audition. He will participate in the All-State Clinic at UNC Greensboro.

National School of Excellence

North Henderson High School was named one of only 26 Schools of Excellence nationwide by ACT's American College Application Campaign for exemplary postsecondary planning support.

West Henderson High School

WHHS DECA

Teacher: Ms. Alison Garrett

The WHHS DECA chapter achieved 15 combined Top Role Play and Top Test Score medals, 10 State Finalists, including 7 top 7 placers advancing to ICDC in Orlando, Thrive Level in both Membership and Chapter Campaigns (highest international designation) and Recognized as a Gold Level Chapter of Distinction, one of only two in the Blue Ridge Region. Aubrey Garrett, Blue Ridge Region Vice President, led both the awards ceremonies and opening session at the state event. ICDC Qualifiers: Caroline Frampton, Elijah Furr, Kian Holden, Jake DeBiase, Matthew Lupo, Holden Hamlin, Aubrey Garrett and Thrive Academy Attendee: Zach Cone

WHHS All-State Band

Band Director: Mr. Allen Klaes

Students: Sydney Hart, Teague Atwell, Bradley Solano, Ellie Drake

These students earned seats in the All-State Honors Band after advancing from the All-District Band and succeeding in statewide auditions.

Henderson County Public Schools

2025 RAYMOND SARBAUGH LEADERSHIP AWARD

Henderson County Public Schools has been named a recipient of the 2025 Raymond Sarbaugh Leadership Award, presented by the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) on March 28 during the annual Conference on Educational Leadership. Superintendents from the 11 western North Carolina school districts most impacted by Hurricane Helene—including Henderson County—accepted the award on behalf of their teams in recognition of the extraordinary leadership and service demonstrated during the storm and throughout the recovery.

In the aftermath of the hurricane, HCPS and other districts transformed their schools into emergency hubs—providing food, shelter, and resources to their communities, even as many staff members faced personal loss, exemplifying the essential role of public schools as the heart of their communities.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Sources of Strength Peer Mentoring Program – *(Shannon Auten, Director of Student Services & Melissa Witmeier, Public Health Strategist – Behavioral Health, Henderson County Department of Public Health)*
Director of Student Services Shannon Auten, Public Health Strategist - Behavioral Health Melissa Witmeier and HCPS Behavior Specialist Cassidy Dillin provided an update on the Sources of Strength Peer Mentoring Program and its potential benefits for Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS). Ms. Auten explained that the program empowers students by utilizing a strength-based approach focused on increasing connectedness and engagement within the school community. Through partnerships and grant funding, the program is slated to be implemented in seven middle and high schools over the next few years, with plans for eventual expansion to all schools in the district. Ms. Witmeier and Ms. Dillin offered further details about the program, emphasizing that its primary mission is upstream prevention—promoting wellness and resilience before issues arise. She noted that one of the key outcomes of the program is that Peer Leaders are four times more likely to refer a suicidal peer, highlighting the program’s impact in terms of early intervention. Additionally, she stressed that effective postvention—support and response after a crisis—serves as an essential component of prevention.

BOARD MEMBERS’ OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Beth Campbell shared how exciting it was to see our schools in action during the robotics competition on Saturday, April 12, 2025, and to witness our STEM programs being put to great use.

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt reflected on how meaningful it was to tour Hendersonville High School with Superintendent Mark Garrett and to see the special way he connected with students.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

At 4:56 p.m. Dr. Kathy Revis opened the meeting for public comment. Nine people addressed the Board. Public comments ended at 4:5:30 p.m. No action was taken.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Kathy Revis cited the Board’s receipt of the Consent Agenda presented for approval upon recommendation of the Superintendent. Prior to the meeting, Board members received documentation relative to the Consent Agenda as follows:

- A. Meeting Schedule
 - 1. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting *[Monday, May 12, 2025, 4:00 p.m., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm) (Boardroom)]*
- B. Minutes
 - 1. March 10, 2025 *(Regular Business Meeting)*
- C. Personnel *(as presented in closed session)*
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases *(as presented in closed session)*
- E. Budget Amendment

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. Mr. Robert Bridges seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved.)*

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Discussion – Board Committees – *(Board Members)*
Chairperson Dr. Kathy Revis led the discussion regarding board committees. Per policy 2230: Board Committees. The policy states, as time and situations demand, ad hoc committees may be appointed by the chairperson with the approval of the board. Ad hoc committees have no final authority and are

subordinate and advisory to the board. After board discussion, Dr. Kathy Revis moved to appoint Mrs. Beth Campbell, Mrs. Shelia Dale and Mrs. Alyssa Norman as the Ad Hoc policy committee. Seconded by Amy Lynn Holt. *(Unanimously approved)*

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Action – Audit Report for 2023-2024 Fiscal Year – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*
Chief Finance Officer Bernie Sochia introduced Mr. Terry Andersen with Gould Killian CPA Group, P.A. to present the 2023-2024 Audit Report. The attached financial statements, which include the Independent Auditors’ Report (required by the Local Government Commission for all LEAs), present the results of operations and financial position of the Henderson County Board of Public Education as of June 30, 2024, and for the fiscal year then ended. The audit report contains an unqualified opinion on the Board’s financial statements, and there were no questioned costs or reportable conditions.
Mr. Blair Craven moved to approve the Audit Report for 2023-2024 fiscal year as presented. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*.
- B. Action – Lottery Application – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*
Chief Finance Officer Bernie Sochia presented the N.C. Education Lottery application. The Public School Building Capital Fund/N.C. Education Lottery Application is to request funds currently available (\$967,183.14) 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 funds are currently being used for debt service on these school building projects. This debt service continues through part of fiscal year 2026.
Mr. Blair Craven moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the North Carolina Education Lottery Application as presented. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*
- C. Action – Contracts/Purchases in Excess of \$90,000 – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*
Chief Finance Officer Bernie Sochia presented a contract in excess of \$90,000. Pursuant to board policies 6420, Contracts with the Board, and 6430, Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials, and Supplies, any purchases or contracts in excess of \$90,000 must be approved by the Board.
The following vendor is presented for approval: J. Bartholomew Construction
During Hurricane Helene, the visitor bleachers at East Henderson High School sustained significant damage from falling trees. Evaluation from structural engineers determined that the bleachers were beyond repair and would need to be replaced. Mark Lusk Architecture, PLLC designed the replacement bleachers and put the project out to bid. Per the attached tabulation of bids, J. Bartholomew Construction is the lowest responsive bidder at \$450,000.
Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve that staff proceed with contracting with J. Bartholomew Construction as presented. Mrs. Beth Campbell seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*
- D. Action – Policy Updates – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*
Chief Administrative Officer Carl Taylor presented the following policy updates for approval:
1. Policy 1720/4030/7235 – Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
This policy update removes the parenthetical statement in the first paragraph defining sex to include pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
 2. Policy 5240 – Advertising in the Schools
This policy update removes the parenthetical statement in Section B defining sex to include pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

3. Policy 7100 – Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
This policy update removes the parenthetical statement in Section A defining sex to include pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This policy removes the parenthetical statement in Section A defining age to be 40 or older.
4. Policy 7232 – Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
This policy update removes the parenthetical statement in the first paragraph, in Section B, and section C defining sex to include pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This policy removes the parenthetical statement in the first paragraph and in Section B defining age to be 40 or older.
5. Policy 8305 – Federal Grant Administration
This policy update adds a paragraph in section A.3 authorizing the finance officer to conduct the self-certification process for the school system and provide to federal agencies documentation raising the micro-purchasing threshold to \$50,000.
6. Policy 9110 – Use and Selection of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers at Risk
This policy update adds a statement in subsection B.2 stating that the superintendent shall proceed pursuant to this subsection after certifying in writing that the project is exempt from the formal procedures in this policy.

Mr. Robert Bridges moved to approve Policy 1720/4030/7235 – Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex; Policy 5240 – Advertising in the Schools; Policy 7100 – Recruitment and Selection of Personnel; Policy 7232 – Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace; Policy 8305 – Federal Grant Administration; Policy 9110 – Use and Selection of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, and Construction Managers at Risk as presented. Mrs. Shelia Dale seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

- E. Action – NHHS JROTC Out of Country School Trip – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*
Chief Administrative Officer Carl Taylor presented information regarding North Henderson High School JROTC out of country school trip. Per Policy 3320, school trips that require travel outside of the continental United States must receive prior approval from the board. The North Henderson High School Air Force JROTC is seeking approval for a student trip to Europe during the March 2026 Spring Break. This all-inclusive, guided tour, organized by EF Educational Tours, will take students to the United Kingdom, France, Luxembourg, and Germany and will provide an in-depth exploration of World War II. Students will examine the conflict from both Allied and Axis perspectives on the Western Front, enhancing their understanding of its historical significance. This trip aligns with the JROTC curriculum, which covers international relations, military history, leadership, tactics, and technology.
Mrs. Shelia Dale moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the North Henderson JROTC Out-of-Country Trip to Europe. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion.
(Unanimously approved)
- F. Action – Individual Class Size Waiver Request – *(Mr. Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent)*
Assistant Superintendent Scott Rhodes presented the individual class size waiver request. Bruce Drysdale Elementary currently exceeds the class size requirements in the 1st and 3rd grades. In accordance with G.S. 115C-301(g), a class-size waiver is being requested for board approval.
Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the Class Size Waiver Request for Bruce Drysdale Elementary, as presented. Mrs. Beth Campbell seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

G. Action – 2024-2025 School Year Re-Administration Program Plan – *(Dr. Shannon Marlowe, Assistant Superintendent)*

Assistant Superintendent Shannon Marlowe presented the 2024-2025 School Year Re- Administration Program Plan for approval. The NC Department of Public Instruction has provided the opportunity for schools to offer remediation and re-administration of end-of-year tests prior to the end of the school year. HCPS is requesting board approval to provide this as an option for end of year assessment, in addition to our established re-administration opportunities after the conclusion of the school year calendar.

Mrs. Beth Campbell moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Instruction approve the 2024-2025 School Year Re-Administration Program Plan. Mrs. Shelia Dale seconded the motion.

(Unanimously approved)

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. CAPITAL UPDATE – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*

Chief Administrative Officer Carl Taylor provided the board with status updates on the construction and facility projects currently underway or planned in the near future:

- HCPS Projects:
 - Fire Panel Replacement - Hendersonville Middle - Completed
 - HVAC Upgrade (F-Hall) - Flat Rock - Engineering Phase
 - Generator - Mills River Academy - Engineering Phase
 - Classroom Flooring Replacement - Various Sites - Under Contract: Scheduled for June
 - Stadium Bleacher Replacement (Visitor Side)- EHHS - Pre-Bid Meeting: Monday, March 31 Bid Opening: Thursday, April 10

No action taken.

B. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Chief Finance Officer Bernie Sochia presented the financial statements and Results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2024-25 fiscal year as of March 31, 2025: Revenues received totaled \$34,251,677 and expenditures made totaled \$27,717,749. At 68% of non-Helene budget, operations are still on pace for budget in Current Expense when considering that almost 9% of the budget will get paid in June in the local supplement.

Results of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2024-25 fiscal year as of March 31, 2025: Revenues totaling \$1,772,848 have been received, and expenditures totaling \$1,425,479 have been made. Third quarter expenditures centered around the gym bleacher replacement projects at West and East which totaled \$305,614. No action taken.

C. HEALTHCARE FELLOWS PROGRAM INFORMATION – *(Mr. Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent)*

Superintendent Mark Garrett shared a Healthcare Fellows Program Update with the board. A collaborative effort between HCPS, BRCC, Advent Health, UNC Health Pardee to facilitate high school seniors’ entry into one of the Allied Health programs at Blue Ridge Community College. Each hospital has committed to fully sponsoring five (5) students for their entire program at BRCC, and each hospital will mentor their ‘fellows’ during their studies with the stated hope of bringing them onto full-time roles in the organization upon program completion. Inspired by the concept of the NC Teaching Fellows Scholarship, this program intends to be a bridge to career for our students interested in Healthcare. Any Henderson County Public Schools senior who has an interest in a healthcare career and is interested in pursuing that healthcare career through Blue Ridge Community College Allied Health Programs are eligible to apply. Superintendent Garrett stated, while we are starting with 10 total students (5 from each hospital) in the fellowship, the hope is that the opportunity will expand in the future to include more students, potentially at other institutions of higher learning. No action was taken.

D. GENERAL OPERATIONS – (Mr. Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent)

Upcoming dates and events shared by Superintendent Mark R. Garrett:

- 2025-2026 Kindergarten Registration - Class of 2038!
 - Registrations as of April 14th: 611
- April: School Library Month & Occupational Therapy Month
- April 17: NC Scholars Luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- April 18: Annual Leave Day - No School for all calendars
- April 25: Special Olympics of Henderson County Spring Games, 9:30 a.m. at East Henderson High School (rain date May 2nd)
- April 29: 2025 HCEF Education Celebration, 5:30 p.m., Point Lookout Vineyards
- May: Mental Health Awareness Month; Asian American Pacific Islander Month
- May 1: CTE Scholars Reception, 12:30 p.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- May 2: School Lunch Hero Day
- May 5-9: National Teacher Appreciation Week
- May 7: National School Nurse Day
- May 7: HCBPE School Tours, 10:00 a.m. at Atkinson Elementary, Innovative High School, Apple Valley Middle School
- May 8: Teacher of the Year Luncheon, 12:00 p.m., The Main Event
- May 8: HCPS Retirement Celebration, 5:30 p.m., The Main Event
- May 12: HCBPE Regular Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Closed Session, 3:00 p.m. Boardroom
- May 15: Top Scholars Banquet, 6:00 p.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- May 26: Memorial Day - No School for all calendars
- May 30: Henderson County High School Graduations:
 - Henderson County Early College, 5:00 p.m.
 - Hendersonville High School, 6:00 p.m.
 - North Henderson High School, 6:00 p.m.
 - East Henderson High School, 7:00 p.m.
 - Henderson County Career Academy, 7:00 p.m.
 - West Henderson High School, 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Robert Bridges moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved at 6:53 p.m.)*

Minutes approved: May 12, 2025