

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

April 13, 2026

The Henderson County Board of Public Education held a meeting on Monday, April 13, 2026 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: Amy Lynn Holt, *Chairperson*, Dr. Kathy Revis, *Vice Chairperson*; Beth Campbell; Stephanie Cantwell; Blair Craven; Shelia Dale; Alyssa Norman

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

Absent: Scott Rhodes, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Attorney Present: John Henning

Board Clerk: Tawana Clayton

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Amy Lynn Holt called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10 p.m. Mrs. Holt requested everyone present to stand as the West Henderson High School Army JROTC representative Deacon Maskell led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

Mrs. Holt asked those present to remain standing and take a moment of silent reflection.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt acknowledged receipt of the meeting agenda and called for a motion to approve it as presented. Mr. Blair Craven moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved)*

STUDENT/STAFF RECOGNITIONS

Superintendent Mark Garrett and principals showcased the student and staff recognitions this month.

The Rugby Middle School Cheer team, led by coach Alexis Burnette, was set to compete at the NCCCA State Competition on January 24, 2026, but Winter Storm Fern forced the event to move to a digital submission—requiring them to record five days early and lose four key practice days. Despite the challenge, the 2025–2026 Rugby Cheerleaders were named State Champions in their division, winning by an impressive three-point margin.

Hendersonville High School student Alex May, led by coach Micheal Coggins, is 3A State Champion at the 150lb Weight Class.

North Henderson High School student Kaitlin Ruminski was nominated as this year's district selection for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program and is now a finalist for the State selection.

North Henderson High School student Maggie Giesenschlag was selected to attend the NC Governor's School for AREA I DISCIPLINE: Choral Music - Soprano.

North Henderson High School student Camryn Marshall has been named North Carolina FCCLA Vice President of National Programs and Membership. Camryn also competed in Leadership and got first place in the state. She will be going to compete at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference this summer.

North Henderson High School student Jayden Lopez competed in Personal Finance at the State FCCLA Competition and placed in the top five in the state.

North Henderson High School student Christopher Hernandez-Montero has been named the North Carolina HOSA State Reporter, Western North Carolina HOSA President, and Western/Southwestern Super Region State Officer.

North Henderson High School Coach John Williams has been named the North Carolina Women's Wrestling Coach of the Year from the National High School Wrestling Coaches Association.

West Henderson High School student Bradley Solano-Ugalde was selected to attend the NC Governor's School for AREA I DISCIPLINE: Instrumental Music, Trumpet.

West Henderson High School students Ellie Drake, Bradley Solano-Ugalde, Layla Hildenbrand, under the direction of Allen Klaes, auditioned and earned a top chair in the All-District Band, then competed in a state level audition against a limited number of elite students from the entire state of North Carolina. These students performed a prepared solo, memorized scales, and sight read a piece of music they had never seen before.

HCPS FRC Team 1225: The Gorillas Robotics team earned and competed at the FIRST North Carolina District Championship in Greensboro following a standout performance at UNC Asheville. The team showed steady growth throughout the season, advancing from a semifinal finish at Cabarrus County to captaining the #4 Alliance, earning the Quality Award, and ranking among the top teams in the state. With 69 district points, they reached the state championship level and competed in Greensboro, where they finished 30th out of 50 teams that qualified at the State competition.

SCHOOL FEATURES – Bruce Drysdale Elementary, Clear Creek Elementary, HC Career Academy, Sources of Strength

Each month, this spotlight will give the opportunity to showcase unique programs, traditions, and successes happening across all 23 of our schools.

Bruce Drysdale Elementary: Bearcats Leading the Way

Principal Jason Joyce, Assistant Principal April Summey, and three student ambassadors presented to the board about a new school celebration called Bearcats Leading the Way. This year, Bruce Drysdale Elementary has implemented the Leader in Me program and wanted a meaningful way to celebrate the 7 Habits and recognize student growth. Each month, teachers select a student who exemplifies the habit being learned. Selected students wear a "medal of honor" for the day, receive a certificate, and are celebrated during a special awards ceremony with their families in attendance.

Clear Creek Elementary: Spring Fling & Glow Art Show

Principal Dena Wolfe, Art Teacher Laura Miller, and four students highlighted the upcoming Spring Fling and Glow Art Show. Over the past five years, students have explored themes such as animals from the Great Barrier Reef, as well as rainforest and forest habitats. This year's theme is science fiction in outer space. Each student in the school contributes two pieces of artwork to the show. This year's Spring Fling and Glow Art Show will be held on Friday, April 24, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The event will feature a book fair, inflatables, food, games, and, of course, the Glow Art Show.

HC Career Academy: "Hidden Gem of HCPS"

Ms. Marley Moreno-Hollifield, Ms. Christine Coren, and three students share what makes the Career Academy such a unique part of Henderson County Public Schools. A strong family atmosphere replaces fear with a true sense of belonging, creating an environment where students feel supported and valued. More than just a "hidden gem," the Career Academy is a lifeline for students and families. Applications are open for all 8th grade students across Henderson County in the early Spring. High school students can transfer through a referral process.

Students describe their experiences in powerful ways:

- Eden shared that the Career Academy has given her wonderful opportunities in art, music, and classes at Blue Ridge.
- Jillian emphasized that academics and community are valued equally, along with supportive peers and a flexible schedule.
- Madison explained that after transferring during her sophomore year, she went from struggling with attendance to thriving.

Sources of Strength:

Director of Student Services Shannon Auten, along with several adult and student leaders, highlighted the impact of Sources of Strength across five HCPS middle and high schools. Sources of Strength is a suicide prevention program that has been shown to reduce suicidal ideation by 29% among middle and high school students. Each school showcased unique ways they bring the program to life:

- West Henderson highlighted student-led initiatives such as presentations to staff, a Thankfulness Turkey project, Teacher Advocacy Day, and March Mentor Madness.
- East Henderson featured a Sources of Strength Spirit Week and introduced a new mascot—a chameleon—symbolizing how individuals adapt to their environment, much like the Sources of Strength Wheel. Their next event will include naming the chameleon mascot.
- North Henderson shared plans for an April fitness challenge and their “Knights vs. Cancer” event on May 8. They are also selling popsicles connected to the Sources of Strength color wheel and hosted their own Spirit Week.

BOARD MEMBERS’ OBSERVATIONS

Beth Campbell shared that across all grade levels—from the district’s youngest learners to its high school students—Henderson County truly feels like one big family. She noted how inspiring it is to see leadership skills growing in students at every stage.

Dr. Kathy Revis said the evening’s presentation was wonderful, emphasizing that what stood out most was that the focus is “not just academics,” but the whole child.

Stephanie Cantwell shared highlights from a recent board tour of Dana Elementary, noting that the school is successfully meeting its goals and praising the students.

Amy Lynn Holt reflected on her experience serving on a selection panel alongside HCPS District Teacher of the Year Ms. Marley Moreno-Hollifield, HCPS Principal of the Year Dr. Katelyn Davis, and a parent representative. She described the process as an opportunity to learn from the “best of the best” while helping choose this year’s Teacher of the Year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

At 5:15 p.m. Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt opened the meeting for public comment. Seven people addressed the Board. Public comments ended at 5:40 p.m. *No action was taken.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt 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 11, 2026 4:00 p.m., (Closed Session at 3:00 pm Room 1A)(Boardroom)*]
- B. Minutes - March 9, 2026 (*Regular Business Meeting*)
- C. Personnel (*as presented in closed session*)
- D. Student Acceptances/Releases (*as presented in closed session*)
- E. Budget Amendment

Mr. Blair Craven moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. Dr. Kathy Revis seconded the motion. (*Unanimously approved.*)

OLD BUSINESS

- A. HCPS Device Protection Plan – (*Mr. Grant Adkins, Director of Technology*)

Grant Adkins, Director of Technology, presented the board with two options for an HCPS Device Protection Plan for consideration, following up on the discussion held in March. The board expressed interest in exploring Option Two more closely, which proposes a technology fee for students in grades

6–12. They suggested setting the fee at \$10 but would like to discuss the proposal further before taking formal action in May.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Action – Audit Contract for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 – *(Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Chief Finance Officer Bernie Sochia presented the Audit Contract for fiscal year 2025-2026 for approval. In accordance with Board Policy #8310, “Annual Independent Audit”, the contract for the HCPS audit for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 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 service by the audit team from Gould Killian CPA Group (formerly Carland and Andersen) as auditor for Henderson County Public Schools have been invaluable, and the continuity is essential. They continue to assist the Finance Department and the individual school bookkeepers on an ad hoc basis, with no additional fees.

Mr. Sochia stated, as to the issue of qualifications and experience, Gould Killian has current experience auditing governmental entities including the City of Hendersonville, the Town of Mills River, the City of Brevard and others. They have also audited other school districts including Transylvania, Madison and Jackson Counties. In North Carolina, accounting firms performing audits are required to have a peer review every three years. Gould Killian’s last peer review was submitted in July 2023 by the Raleigh firm of Batchelor, Tillery & Roberts, LLP. Gould Killian 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, Gould Killian continues to have a very reasonable fee at \$39,500 to conduct the audit and prepare the financial statements.

Mr. Blair Craven moved that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the “Contract to Audit Accounts” between the Henderson County Board of Public Education and Gould Killian CPA Group for the period beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026. Mrs. Alyssa Norman seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved.)*

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

A. Capital Update – *(Mr. Carl Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer)*

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

- HCPS Projects
 - Program and Conceptual Phasing Study - East Henderson - In Progress
 - Pedestrian Bridge Replacement - Rugby - In Progress
 - Air Handler Unit Upgrade - West Henderson - Completed
 - Classroom Unit Upgrade (X-1) - West Henderson - Completed
- MRTS:
 - HVAC System - Atkinson - Awaiting DPI approval
 - HVAC Controls Replacement - Sugarloaf, Middle Schools, NHHS, WHHS - In Progress
 - Roofing - In Progress
 - Flat Rock (F-Hall)
 - East Henderson (C-Hall, Media Center)
 - New Construction - Bus Garage
 - Architect: LS3P Associates
 - Construction Manager at-Risk: Edifice Construction

No action was 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 2025-26 fiscal year as of March 31, 2026: Revenues received totaled \$34,502,279 and expenditures made totaled \$27,440,185. For the year, expenditures are \$277,564 less and revenues are \$250,602 more than last year at this point. Through the third quarter, expenditures are at 66% of the budgeted amount. Results of operations of the Capital Outlay Fund for the 2025-26 fiscal year as of March 31, 2026: Revenues received totaled \$2,594,994 and expenditures made totaled \$1,771,303. Third quarter expenditures of \$459,066 were focused on the storm pipe repair (\$82,904), corridor lighting upgrade project (\$63,682), custodial equipment replacement (\$35,578), the grant funded Ag building at North (\$50,529), and an activity bus (\$156,919). Results of operations of the Enterprise Fund for the 2025-26 fiscal year as of February 28, 2026:

a. For Child Nutrition, revenues received of \$6,042,794 and expenditures made of \$6,091,303 resulted in a net deficit of \$48,509. An increase of \$32,375 for the month.

b. For Child Care, revenues received of \$764,937 and expenditures made of \$834,963 resulted in a net deficit of \$70,026. An increase of \$11,893 for the month and at 76% of the budgeted deficit for the year.

No action was taken.

C. General Operations – *(Mr. Mark R. Garrett, Superintendent)*

Superintendent Mark Garrett shared upcoming dates and events shared:

- Kindergarten Registration is open for the 2026-2027 school year
 - Ready to Shine - Class of 2039!
- April 16: NC Scholars Luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- April 18: HCPS Robotics Competition, 12:30 p.m. (Spectators), North Henderson High
- April 23: 2025 HCEF Education Celebration, 5:30 p.m., Blue Ridge Community College
- April 24: Special Olympics of Henderson County Spring Games, 9:30 a.m. at East Henderson High School (rain date May 1st)
- April 30: HCBPE Budget Work Session, 8:30 a.m., Boardroom
- April 30: CTE Scholar Reception, 12:00 p.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- May: Mental Health Awareness Month; Asian American Pacific Islander Month
- May 1: School Lunch Hero Day
- May 4-8: National Teacher Appreciation Week
- May 5: Teacher of the Year Luncheon, 12:00 p.m., Kenmure
- May 5: HCPS Retirement Celebration, 5:30 p.m., Kenmure
- May 6: National School Nurse Day
- May 11: HCBPE Regular Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Boardroom; Closed Session, 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 1A
- May 14: Top Scholars Banquet, 6:00 p.m., Blue Ridge Conference Hall
- May 18: National Speech Language Pathologist Day
- May 22: Last Day of School, Traditional/Early College Calendar
- May 22: Henderson County Public Schools High School Graduation:
 - 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.
- May 29: Last Day of School, Flex Calendar

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Blair Craven moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Beth Campbell seconded the motion. *(Unanimously approved at 6:22 p.m.)*

Minutes approved: May 11, 2026