

PUBLIC  
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
MINUTES OF MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023

*The information included here provides a summary of the agenda items presented and actions taken during the above meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County. The video recordings of the Board meetings are the official record of the meetings and can be viewed at: <http://www.hcps.org/boe/livestream/>. Informational reports are located at: <https://www.hcps.org/boe/boardmeetingschedules.aspx>*

Open Session

The Board of Education of Harford County met in open session in hybrid format in person and via video teleconference on Monday, October 16, 2023. President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 4:33 PM

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Miss Madina Sabirova, who was absent.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Dr. Aaron Poynton.

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Motion, Second and Vote

Mrs. Kocher made a motion to waive public comment in its entirety in light of the limited nature of the open session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Strauss and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(7)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Mrs. Kocher, seconded by Ms. Bruce and approved in a voice vote 9-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Miss Sabirova, who was absent.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Dr. Aaron Poynton.

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Staff Present:

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent

Dr. Eric Davis, Chief of Administration

Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations

Eric Clark, Director of Budget

Marc Hamilton, Principal of Riverside Elementary School

Lisa Minutoli, Principal of Churchville Elementary School

Kimberly H. Neal, General Counsel

Daniel Reimers, Human Resources Staff and Labor Relations Specialist

Ben Richardson, Assistant Director of Human Resources

Rebecca Spencer, Supervisor Teacher Prep and Professional Development

William Shinoff, Esq., of The Frantz Law Group

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

In-person attendance: Dr. Sean Bulson, Dr. Eric Davis, Dr. Mae Alfree, Mr. Marc Hamilton, Ms. Lisa Minutoli, Kimberly Neal, Esq., Mr. Daniel Reimers, Mr. Ben Richardson, Ms. Rebecca Spencer, William Shinoff, Esq., and Mrs. Yvonne Rallo

Virtual attendance: Mr. Eric Clark

The Board of Education met in closed session for the purposes of discussing:

Topic: Discussion surrounding career ladder and possible decision regarding parameters for negotiations with bargaining units.

Reason for Closed Session: To maintain confidentiality of potential parameters, if any, of negotiation with bargaining units and discussions related thereto.

Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, introduced Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations who discussed proposed bargaining parameters for the Board's consideration. Mr. Richardson, Dr. Alfree, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, Mr. Dan Reimers, Human Resources Staffing Specialist, Mr. Marc Hamilton, Principal of Riverside Elementary School, Ms. Lisa Minutoli, Principal of Churchville Elementary School, and Ms. Rebecca Spencer, Supervisor Teacher Prep and Professional Development, were available to answer the Board's questions. Mr. Richardson on behalf of Dr. Alfree sought the Board's direction and approval to proceed with the recommendations as presented and discussed.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion giving Dr. Alfree approval to proceed with the recommended parameters as presented for specific bargaining units. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bruce and approved in a roll call vote 9/0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Note: Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, Mr. Dan Reimers, Human Resources Staffing Specialist, Mr. Marc Hamilton, Principal of Riverside Elementary School, Ms. Lisa Minutoli, Principal of Churchville Elementary School, and Ms. Rebecca Spencer, Supervisor Teacher Prep and Professional Development, were excused from the following discussion

Topic: Discussion regarding mass litigation related to damages related to the vaping epidemic.

Reason for Closed Session: To preserve the attorney-client privilege.

The Board received a presentation from Kimberly H. Neal, Esq. and William Shinoff, Esq., with The Frantz Law Group, regarding Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) settlement agreement with Altria to settle claims HCPS may have regarding costs incurred by HCPS to address JUUL® usage by HCPS students.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

#### Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Sewell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bruce, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 6:16 PM.

#### Business Meeting

#### Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Roll call was taken. All Board members were present.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Miss Madina Sabirova, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, Ms. Melissa Hahn, and Dr. Aaron Poynton.

#### Adoption of Agenda

President Poynton called for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn and adopted in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

### Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-President Hahn led the Pledge of Allegiance

### Board Member Comments

Board member comments were provided.

### Public Comments

Speakers were invited to the meeting to provide their comments for the record either in-person or virtually. President Poynton read a statement regarding protocol for public comments which included a provision that each speaker would have three (3) minutes to speak and speakers representing a group would have five (5) minutes to speak. Mrs. Yvonne Rallo, Board of Education Administrative Support Coordinator, called on individual speakers who were in person at the meeting and had registered to speak at the Board meeting. The following thirteen (13) people registered and provided in-person public comment: Amber Milnes, David Bauer, Dawn Sinclair, Christopher Providence, Amanda Roberts, Cathy Kowalewski, Jacob Bennett, Jackie Johnson, Christina Lanocha, Suzie Scott, representing the group "Moms for Liberty Harford County", Margie Gallagher, DeLane Lewis, representing the group "Together We Will", and Jeannine Cannito. Ms. Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications, called on individual speakers who had pre-registered to provide public comments virtually. The following one (1) person registered to provide virtual public comment: Darcia Anthony.

Note: The following registered in-person public speaker, Margie Gallagher filled out a "Request to appear before the Board of Education Card" but declined her turn to provide any comments when her name was called.

### Old Business

President Poynton announced no "Old Business" was scheduled for discussion.

### Item A. Consent Agenda

President Poynton called for a motion to approve the consent agenda as follows:

1. Contract Award: Board Letter HVAC Direct Digital Control of Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Equipment
2. Contract Award: Chromebook Protective Cases

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion to approve the consent agenda items with the exception of item two (2), which was removed for discussion. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perry. The consent agenda was approved with all items except the following numbered item: "2. Contract Award: Chromebook Protective Cases," in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

### Consent Item #2 Contract Award: Chromebook Protective Cases

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve consent agenda item #2 Contract Award: Chromebook Protective Cases. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 9-1. Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Hahn (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

### Meeting Break

The Board recessed until they were called back to order by President Poynton.

### New Business

#### Item B. Presentation on Proposed Altria Settlement

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, presented information to the Board regarding the Frantz Law Group representation of Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) litigation against JUUL Labs, Inc. and Altria Group, Inc. as co-defendants. HCPS seeks to enter into a settlement agreement with "Altria." In settlement discussions with Mr. William Shinoff of the Frantz Law Group, an offer has been made to settle claims HCPS may have against the co-defendants. A copy of the proposed settlement agreement was provided to the Board for their review. Ms. Neal, with

the Superintendent's recommendation, sought Board approval to proceed with necessary actions for HCPS to execute the settlement agreement by November 30, 2023.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Carol Bruce made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to enter into the Altria settlement agreement. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry and approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item C. Presentation of FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program

Mr. Cornell Brown, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Ms. Patti Jo Beard, Executive Director of Facilities Management, Mr. Chris Morton, Supervisor of Planning and Construction and Ms. Missy Valentino, Facilities Planner provided the Board a fourth presentation of the FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The presentation focused on the local only funding needs as identified by Harford County Public Schools' (HCPS) stakeholders. These needs include, but are not limited to, technology refresh; necessary renovations and upgrades to HCPS facilities to meet education laws and mandates; the purchase of replacement buses; and projects to meet the most critical compliance, security, facilities, and educational requirements of HCPS. Board approval will be sought in December for the FY 2025 CIP for submission to the local government.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item D. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson's report was provided as follows:

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that Harford County Public Schools proposed Operating Budget survey will be sent out Tuesday, October 17, 2023 and asked for the community to provide their feedback.

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that the option to purchase a device protection plan through Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is available and encouraged the community to consider purchasing a plan for their student's devices.

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that this week is National School Bus Safety Week.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

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Sean W. Bulson, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools and Secretary-Treasurer

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Aaron S. Poynton, D.P.A.  
President, Board of Education of Harford County



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PARTICIPATION  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023

Attachment

**OPEN SESSION: 4:30 PM – 4:35 PM**

This meeting will be conducted virtually with no public attendance due to the brief nature of this meeting and the logistical issues regarding allowing public attendance in advance of the 6:30 PM meeting.

\*The only item the Board will consider during this open meeting is consideration of meeting in a closed session.

**CLOSED SESSION: 4:35 PM – 6:20 PM**

**BUSINESS MEETING: 6:30 PM – ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid fashion and public attendance will be permitted as explained below:

**DOORS WILL OPEN AT 6:20 PM AND THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 6:30 PM**

The Board of Education of Harford County will hold a hybrid Business Meeting on Monday, October 16, 2023, at 6:30 PM in the Board Room of the A.A. Roberty Building with Board Members, staff, and presenters in attendance both virtually and in-person. Seats will be available on a first come-first served basis. The meeting will be streamed live and archived for later viewing on the HCPS [Website](#).

**Public Comment Participation Call-In and In-Person Process**

Individuals or groups recognized by Harford County Public Schools (i.e. – PTAs, unions, and other school system stakeholders) wishing to speak on an agenda item or to comment on an education-related matter not on the agenda may request to do so by sending an email to [publiccomment@hcps.org](mailto:publiccomment@hcps.org) or calling 410-588-5347.

Call-In Registrations must be received by 12:00 PM on Monday, October 16, 2023. All fields on the registration form must be completed.

1. First and Last name / if speaker is a Group Representative, then please state the name of the Group
2. Local Address
3. Email Address
4. Phone Number
5. Agenda item or subject your Public Comment pertains to
6. Will you provide in-person **or** virtual Public Comment
7. Registration forms are limited to one (1) per person

***\*Failure to provide complete information as required above will void the request to provide Public Comment.***

- Registered virtual speakers will receive an email from HCPS with a Call-in Phone # and a Conference ID #.
- Registered speakers are required to call-in and enter the conference ID# at 6:30 PM on Monday, October 16, 2023.
- **Important:** If you are unable to take your phone off mute, you may need to dial \*6.
- If you are admitted from the virtual lobby to the meeting, you will be greeted by an HCPS staff member when it is time to begin your public comment. Expected hold time in the virtual lobby may vary based on number of registered speakers. The maximum wait time in the lobby is 30 minutes; should you be disconnected please call back.
- "Request to Appear Before the Board" cards will be available for in-person attendees prior to the Board Meeting for sign-up and must be submitted prior to the opening of the meeting.

**The Board has authorized public comment in accord with its policy [Public Participation at Board Open Meetings or Public Hearings](#) and as summarized below:**

- Each speaker shall be limited to no more than three (3) minutes and five (5) minutes for individuals representing groups. Speakers must state his or her name, and, if representing a group, must identify the group he or she represents. If a speaker identifies themselves as a representative of a group, then only one (1) representative from the group may provide comment for the identified group.
- The Board presiding officer may reduce the amount of time allocated to each speaker if allocating 3 minutes to each speaker will impede the Board's ability to complete scheduled business.
- The Board will receive in-person public comment first and virtual public comment second. The Board expects that all comments will be submitted with the decorum and respect appropriate to the conduct of public business.
- Topics such as personnel matters, pending appeals, specific student disciplinary matters or which constitute commercial solicitations are not permitted.
- Disparaging comments, personal attacks, and inflammatory remarks about specific schools, personnel, any person, or group are not permitted. Speakers who engage in these comments will be reminded of the rules and the Board reserves the right to remove the speaker. In addition, public comment is an opportunity for members of the community to address the Board of Education. Please direct your comments to the Board and not to other members of the public in the audience.
- All public comments submitted will be part of the records maintained by the Board office.

**Speakers are reminded that public comments are considered public information and, as such, are subject to the Maryland Public Information Act.**