

PUBLIC
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
MINUTES OF MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024

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, January 8, 2024. 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. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, and Mrs. Denise Perry

Motion, Second and Vote

Mrs. Hahn 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 Mrs. Kocher and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Mrs. Kocher, seconded by Mrs. Hahn 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. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, and Mrs. Denise Perry

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

Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services

Kimberly H. Neal, General Counsel

Daniel Reimers, Human Resources Staff and Labor Relations Specialist

Ben Richardson, Assistant Director of Human Resources

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

In-person attendance: Dr. Sean Bulson, Dr. Eric Davis, Dr. Mae Alfree, Mr. Eric Clark, Ms. Deborah Judd, Kimberly Neal, Esq., Mr. Daniel Reimers, Mr. Ben Richardson, and Mrs. Yvonne Rallo

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

Topic: Discussion 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, Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, and Mr. Daniel Reimers, HR Staff & Labor Relations Specialist were available to answer the Board's questions. Dr. Alfree sought the Board's direction and approval to proceed with the proposed parameters as presented and discussed. The following actions were taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Bruce made a motion to accept the proposed recommendations relating to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) bargaining proposals as presented and discussed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to accept the proposed recommendations relating to the Harford County Education Association – Education Support Professionals (HCEA-ESP) bargaining proposals as presented and discussed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion to accept the proposed recommendations relating to the Harford County Education Association – Certificated (HCEA-CIP) bargaining proposals as presented and discussed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bruce and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Sabirova was absent.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Sewell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Strauss, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:46 PM.

Business Meeting

Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Roll call was taken. All Board members were present.

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

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez and Mrs. Carol Bruce

Note: Mrs. Denise Perry joined the meeting, in-person, after roll-call was taken.

Adoption of Agenda

President Poynton called for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sewell 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 ten (10) people registered and provided in-person public comment: David Bauer, Chris Fendryk, William Martino, Chrystie Crawford-Smick, representing the group, Harford County Education Association (HCEA), Jeannine Cannito, Cathy Kowalewski, Rob Collins, Christina Lanocha, Jacob Bennett, Melissa Williams, representing the group, Association Of Public School Administrators and Supervisors of Harford County (APSASHC). No virtual speakers registered to provide public comment.

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: HVAC Filters
2. Contract Award: TV Studio and Sound Reinforcement Installations and Upgrades

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion to approve consent agenda item number one (1). The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kocher. The consent agenda was approved for item number: “1. Contract Award: HVAC Filters,” in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Consent Item #2 Contract Award: TV Studio and Sound Reinforcement Installations and Upgrades

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve consent agenda item number two (2) “Contract Award: TV Studio and Sound Reinforcement Installations and Upgrades”. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mueller. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

New Business

Item B. Decision on Proposed Inclement Weather Plan

Dr. Eric Davis, Chief of Administration, and Ms. Heather Kutcher, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, presented the Board further information on the proposed Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Virtual Day Instruction Plan for the 2023-2024 School Year. The plan was first presented to the Board at the December 18, 2023, Board business meeting and was posted on HCPS.org for public input, and a total of forty-six (46) responses were received. Out of the 46 responses, thirty-six (36) comments were in favor of the proposed plan. Ms. Kutcher presented the Board an overview of the implementation process for assigning work to students, as well as the access that parents will have in Canvas (HCPS Learning Management System). Board approval was sought to support and apply to use three (3) asynchronous days in the event of inclement weather during the 2023-2024 school year. If approved, it will allow asynchronous virtual instruction on three (3) of the six (6) designated inclement weather make-up days. This will result in the final possible day of instruction (with three (3) “traditional” inclement weather days) being Monday, June 10, 2024. Currently, with six (6) “traditional” inclement weather days built into the calendar, the final instructional day is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2024. Dr. Poynton requested that this inclement weather plan approval request process be started earlier next school year.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation of the inclement weather plan be submitted to MSDE for approval, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kocher and approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Meeting Break

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

Item C. Presentation of Superintendent's Proposed FY2025 Budget

The Board received a presentation of the Superintendent's FY 2025 proposed budget from Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget. The presented fiscal year 2025 local request to support the unrestricted budget is \$356.5 million, an increase of \$41.7 million. The total proposed increase to the unrestricted budget is \$47.3 million, or 7.7% higher than the current budget. A salary and wage package is expected to cost \$17.6 million. Insurance and other fixed charges are expected to increase \$7.3 million. With the addition of three new programs, Special Education is expected to increase \$8.1 million. Transportation needs are expected to increase \$2.4 million. The unrestricted budget proposal also includes an additional 171.6 FTE positions. Of the total requested positions, 123.6 FTE are included to move staff from grant funding to the operating budget. The remaining positions are related to the proposed new special education programs. The fiscal 2025 proposed Unrestricted Operating, Restricted, and Food Service budgets are \$660.9 million, \$44.5 million, and \$22.0 million, respectively. The Capital Projects fund includes state and local funding to support capital repairs and construction. The fiscal 2025 Proposed Capital Projects fund budget is projected to be \$120.3 million. The Board of Education approved the proposed Capital budget for submission to the state and local governments on September 18th and December 4th, 2023, respectively.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item I. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson's comments were provided.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

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

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, JANUARY 8, 2024

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 6:00 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 – 5:45 PM

BUSINESS MEETING: 6:00 PM – ADJOURNMENT

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

DOORS WILL OPEN AT 5:50 PM AND THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 6:00 PM

The Board of Education of Harford County will hold a hybrid Business Meeting on Monday, January 8, 2024, at 6:00 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 or calling 410-588-5347.

Call-In Registrations must be received by 12:00 PM on Monday, January 8, 2024. 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 6:00 PM on Monday, January 8, 2024.
- **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.