

PUBLIC
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
MINUTES OF MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 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, February 12, 2024. President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Ms. Carol Bruce and Miss Madina Sabirova, who were absent.

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

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Mrs. Denise Perry, and 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 8-0. Ms. Carol Bruce and Miss Madina Sabirova were absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(1)(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 8-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Ms. Carol Bruce and Miss Madina Sabirova were 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, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Denise Perry and 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

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, Mr. Eric Clark, Ms. Deborah Judd, Kimberly Neal, Esq., Mr. Daniel Reimers, Mr. Ben Richardson, and Mrs. Yvonne Rallo

Virtual attendance: Dr. Mae Alfree

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

Topic: Ethics panel replacement of member

Reason for Closed Session: To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of information regarding the nominee. Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., led a discussion and presentation regarding the proposed candidates to serve as members of the Board Ethics Panel.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Note: Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, and Mr. Dan Reimers, Human Resources Staffing Specialist, were excused from the previous discussion

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.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Sewell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Hahn and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:33 PM.

Business Meeting

Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:01 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, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Melissa Hahn

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 Miss Sabirova and adopted in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Pledge of Allegiance

Miss Madina Sabirova led the Pledge of Allegiance

Item A. Student Performance in Honor of Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, the Board received an oratory presentation from Havre de Grace Student, Miss Khania Charlton.

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 twenty-one (21) people registered and provided in-person public comment: Danielle Bedsaul, representing the group, Association of Harford County Administrative, Technical and Supervisory Professionals (AHCATSP), Josie Cosgrove, Jay Edwards, representing the group, "Harford County School Bus Contractors Association" (HCSBCA), Tracy Papinchock, Crystal Rufenacht, Cindy Poper, Kelly Fonger, Jackie Johnson, Cathy Kowalewski, Renee DeBiase, Whitney Sabine, William Martino, Chrystie Crawford-Smick, representing the group, Harford County Education Association (HCEA), Melissa Williams, representing the group, Association Of Public School Administrators and Supervisors of Harford County (APSASHC), Suzie Scott, representing the group, Moms for Liberty – Harford County, Tom Piddington, David Faby, Doug Rudd, Christina Lanocha, Gary Johnson, and Linda Zuitkovitz. 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: David Bauer.

Old Business

President Poynton called for a motion to approve the following old business item:

1. Decision on Previously Tabled: Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: November 20, 2023, December 4, 2023, and December 18, 2023

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Kocher made a motion to approve old business item one (1) “Decision on Previously Tabled: Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: November 20, 2023, December 4, 2023, and December 18, 2023”. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alvarez. The motion passed in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item B. Recognition – Resolution for Service on the Ethics Panel of the Harford County Board of Education

President Poynton recognized Francis "Frank" P. King, Esquire, for his years of service on the Board of Education’s Ethics Panel. A copy of the resolution is attached to this meeting’s minutes.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to enter the resolution on the record. 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. Consent Agenda

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

1. Contract Award: Playground Equipment, Assessments, and Inspections
2. Contract Award: Educational School Supplies
3. Contract Award: Benefits Enrollment Services
4. Contract Award: Care Solace, Inc.
5. Contract Award: Ford Transit Vehicles and Bronco with Trade-Ins
6. Contract Award: Modular Classroom for Various HCPS Locations

Motion, Second and Vote – Mr. Sewell made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Strauss and the consent agenda was 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.

New Business

Item D. Presentation on Middle School Innovation

Mr. Mike O'Brien, Executive Director of Middle & High School Performance, Ms. Natalie Holloway, Director of Middle School Innovation, Mr. Andrew Renzulli, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Ms. Helen Miller, Principal of Southampton Middle School, gave the Board a presentation on Middle School Innovation. A background, overview, and highlights of the Middle School Reform with the Comprehensive Secondary School Reform Program (CSSRP) were given. In the fall of 2021, HCPS applied for the LEADS Program through the Maryland State Department of Education in order to continue and improve upon the work of middle school innovation. Ms. Holloway presented an overview of the first phase of the Middle School Innovation. This initiative supports the College and Career Readiness standards, specifically Pillar three (3) for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item E. Decision on Superintendent's Proposed FY2025 Budget

Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, and Ms. Mary Edmunds, Budget Analyst, provided an overview of the Superintendent's proposed budgets for FY2025 and were available to answer the Board's questions. Board approval was sought for the proposed budgets as presented and discussed. The following actions were taken.

Unrestricted Fund: Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion, seconded by Dr. Mueller to approve the Unrestricted Fund in the amount "six hundred sixty million, eight hundred seventy-five thousand, six hundred nine dollars and zero cents" (\$660,875,609.00) as presented with amendments. The motion passed with a 7-3 roll call vote. Casting the affirmative votes: Mrs. Alvarez, Mrs. Bruce, Dr. Mueller, Mrs. Perry, Miss Sabirova, Mr. Sewell, and Mrs. Hahn. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Casting the negative votes: Mrs. Kocher, Ms. Strauss, and Dr. Poynton.

Restricted Fund: Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Bruce to approve the Restricted Fund in the amount of "forty-five million, seventy-nine thousand, three hundred ninety dollars and zero cents" (\$45,079,390.00), as presented. The motion passed in a unanimous 10-0 roll call vote. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Food and Nutrition Fund: Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sewell to approve the Food Service Fund in the amount of "twenty-one million, nine hundred seventy-two thousand, five hundred dollars and zero cents" (\$21,972,500.00). The motion passed in a unanimous 10-0 roll call vote. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item F. Discussion on Proposed Changes to Board Policy 04-0020-000, Controversial Issues

Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton presented Board policy entitled: 04-0020-000, Controversial Issues. This policy was already posted for public comment, feedback was received, and substantive changes were made to the proposed policy, incorporating some of the received feedback. A discussion with Board Members ensued and further changes to the policy were proposed. Dr. Poynton shared that the proposed revised policy will again be posted on HCPS.org to allow for further public comment. Board approval will be sought at a future Board meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item G. Discussion on Proposed Revisions to Board Policy Portable Communication Devices

Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton presented Board policy entitled: Portable Communication Devices. This policy was already posted for public comment, feedback was received, and substantive changes were made to the proposed policy, incorporating some of the received feedback. A discussion with Board Members ensued and further changes to the policy were proposed. Dr. Poynton shared that the proposed revised policy will again be posted on HCPS.org to allow for further public comment. Board approval will be sought at a future Board meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item H. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson's comments were provided.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 10:16 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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, there is, as provided by law, a Board Ethics Panel which implement the Board Ethics Policy.

WHEREAS, Board Ethics Panel members do not receive compensation for their services.

WHEREAS, Francis (“Frank”) P. King, Esquire, volunteered his time and service as a member of the Board Ethics Panel.

WHEREAS, Francis (“Frank”) P. King, Esquire, was essential to the proper and effective functioning of the Board Ethics Panel.

NOW WHEREFORE, the Board of Education of Harford County extends its sincere gratitude and thanks to Francis (“Frank”) P. King, Esquire, for the services he rendered as a member of the Board Ethics Panel.



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PARTICIPATION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 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, February 12, 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, February 12, 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, February 12, 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.