

PUBLIC  
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
MINUTES OF MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 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 26, 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 Mrs. Denise Perry and Miss Madina Sabirova, who were absent.

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

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Motion, Second and Vote

Ms. Bruce 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 8-0. Mrs. Perry and Miss Sabirova were 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. Strauss and approved in a voice vote 8-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Mrs. Perry and Miss 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, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual attendance: Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Note: Both Mrs. Alvarez and Mrs. Perry arrived in person after roll call was taken

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

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

Virtual attendance: Mr. Eric Clark

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, was joined by Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations, and Mr. Daniel Reimers, Human Resources Staff and Labor Relations Specialist to present to the Board proposed bargaining parameters for the Board's consideration. Mr. Richardson, Dr. Alfree, Mr. Reimers, Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, and Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, 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. Kocher made a motion to accept the proposed recommendations relating to the Harford County Education Association – Education Support Professionals (HCEA-ESP) bargaining proposals as presented with modifications as discussed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Madina Sabirova was absent.

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

#### Adjournment

With no further business, Mrs. Kocher motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Hahn, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:11 PM.

#### Business Meeting

##### Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:00 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

Note: Mrs. Melissa Hahn joined the meeting virtually 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 Ms. Strauss and adopted in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

##### Pledge of Allegiance

Student Member of the Board, Miss Madina Sabirova 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 twenty-one (21) people registered and provided in-person public comment: Daniel Cornitcher, Vicki Jones, representing the group “Harford County NAACP”, Beth Kowalchek, Viraj Singh, Cindy Poper, Jacob Bennett, representing “County Council”, Cathy Kowalewski, Bonny Knudsen, Jo Riedel, Jeannine Cannito, Valerie Simmons, Jessica Fendryk, William Martino, Jackie Johnson, Tina Lanocha, Tina Graf, Macaroni Jakse, Renee DeBiase, Kathleen Khoury, representing the group, “Decoding Dyslexia Harford County”, Emma Peller, Suzie Scott, representing the group “Moms for Liberty Harford County”. 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 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. Monthly Personnel Report: December 2023 and January 2024
2. Contract Award: Homestead Wakefield Elementary School Furniture MAPT
3. Contract Award: Homestead Wakefield Elementary School Furniture OMNIA
4. Contract Award: Portable Two-Way Radios
5. Candidates for Board of Education Ethics Panel Positions

Motion, Second and Vote – Mr. Sewell made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mueller and the consent agenda was approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

#### Item B. Contract Award: Professional Development for Reading Instruction

President Poynton opened the proposed approval of the “Contract Award: Professional Development for Reading Instruction” for Board discussion. After Board discussion the following motion to vote was made.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the contract award for Professional Development for Reading Instruction. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bruce. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

#### Item C. Contract Award: Algebra 1 Resources

President Poynton opened the proposed approval of the “Contract Award: Algebra 1 Resources” for Board discussion. After Board discussion the following motion to vote was made.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the contract award for Algebra 1 Resources. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Mrs. Terri Kocher abstained from providing a vote.

#### Meeting Break

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

#### New Business

#### Item D. Presentation on the Harford County Public Schools Apprenticeship Maryland Program

Mr. Joe Connolly, Supervisor of CTE and Magnet Programs, Mr. Matt Johnstone, Coordinator of Apprenticeships and Workforce Development, Ms. Chloe Gauthier, Student at Havre de Grace High School, and Mr. Dondre Lawson, CEO Emerald Technical Solutions provided the Board a presentation of the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Apprenticeship Maryland Program. The presentation included background history of youth apprenticeships in Maryland, current expansion and benefits, and upcoming events.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item E. Decision on Proposed 2024-2025 HCPS Calendar Edits

Ms. Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications and Dr. Peter Carpenter, Director of Organizational Development, provided the Board the following proposed edit requests to the 2024-2025 Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) calendar that was voted on by the Board at the December 18, 2023 Board meeting. Board discussion followed on the proposed edits and also on development of the school calendar for next year.

## 2024-2025 HCPS Calendar: Requested Edits

<b>BOE Approved Calendar: December 2023</b>	<b>HCPS Calendar Edit Requests: February 2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quarter End Dates</b> (total days)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 31 (41)</li> <li>• January 24 (46)</li> <li>• March 28 (44)</li> <li>• June 12 (49)</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Prekindergarten</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start date: September 4, 2024</li> <li>• End date: June 12, 2025</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quarter End Dates</b> (total days)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 8 (44)</li> <li>• January 29 (46)</li> <li>• April 4 (46)</li> <li>• June 12 (44)</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Prekindergarten</b> (to follow past practice)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start date: September 5, 2024</li> <li>• End date: June 10, 2025</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 2024-2025 HCPS Calendar: Requested Edits

<b>BOE Approved Calendar: December 2023</b>	<b>HCPS Calendar Edit Requests: February 2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Hires ONLY: August 21-23</li> <li>• All staff: August 26-30</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Early Dismissal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students ONLY: December 20</li> <li>• May 9</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Hires ONLY: August 22-23</li> <li>• NO PD August 26</li> <li>• All staff: August 27-30</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Early Dismissal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students AND staff: December 20</li> <li>• December 6 (add; remove May 9)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

After Board discussion the following action was taken on the presented 2024-2025 HCPS School Calendar proposed edits:

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Kocher made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hahn to approve the proposed calendar edits to the 2024-2025 HCPS School Calendar, as presented. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 5-0. (Student member cast an affirmative vote, but it does not count). Ms. Carol Bruce, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, and Mr. Wade Sewell abstained from providing a vote.

Item F. Decision on Site for Combination Harford Academy and New Elementary School Project

Mr. Cornell Brown, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, Mr. Chris Morton, Supervisor of Planning and Construction and Ms. Missy Valentino, Facilities Planner, presented the Board information for the new combination Harford Academy and new elementary school project. Harford County Government (HCG) has provided Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) with a list of properties for potential school site locations. Only one site met all the needs without major upgrades being needed to County infrastructure. The identified property is made up of two parcels (Plat Book No. 210, folio 89 and Plat Book No. 203, folio 20) and is located at 301 N Fountain Green Road., Bel Air 21015-2703 adjacent to the Eva Mar Community. The site allows the Harford Academy school to continue with the partnerships already established with Harford Technical School High School, Harford Community College, and Towson University Northeast. HCG reached an agreement with the property owners, Presbyterian Home of Maryland, Incorporated (Presbyterian), to purchase the property for the Harford Academy school construction project. Presbyterian has made significant improvements in the amount of \$2,168,031.53 to the site, including infrastructure improvements that benefit the Property and future construction. HCG has agreed to purchase the property. As part of the agreement, HCPS would have to pay for the infrastructure improvements. Presbyterian agrees to accept from the Board, \$1,660,000 for the improvements. The \$1,660,000 will come from the \$16,000,000 funded by the HCG in the FY 2024 Capital improvement program for planning and design of the Harford Academy School. Subsequently, the HCG will fund the project in future Capital requests to ensure the project is fully funded.

After Board discussion the following actions were taken on the Superintendent’s proposed recommendations:

Recommendation 1 Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the site located at 301 N Fountain Green Road, Bel Air 21015-2703 made up of two parcels; Plat Book No. 210, folio 89 and Plat Book No. 203, folio 20, as the location for the new Harford Academy and Elementary School combination facility. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kocher and approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Recommendation 2 Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the Board’s authority to negotiate an agreement with Presbyterian, in an amount not to exceed one million six hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$1,660,000) for the infrastructure improvements on the site located at 301 N Fountain Green Road, Bel Air 21015-2703 made up of two parcels; Plat Book No. 210, folio 89 and Plat Book No. 203, folio 20, and it is contingent on Harford County Government purchase of the property for the Harford Academy use. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bruce and approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item G. Presentation on Quarterly Financial Report for the Period Ending December 31, 2023

The Board received a presentation on the quarterly financial report for the period ending December 31, 2023 from Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services. The report included a detailed analysis of revenues, expenditures, and projections to year-end. The following highlights of the financial information were presented:

- Revenues – Total revenues received to-date are 50.3% of budget.
- Expenditures – Total expenditures are 44.1% of the appropriation.
- Fund Balance – FY2024 projected surplus as of December 31, 2023 is \$5.2 million. Unassigned fund balance is estimated to be \$30.8 million.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item H. Presentation on Proposed New Board Policy Display of Flags

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, presented information regarding proposed new Board policy Display of Flags. The proposed new policy was introduced at the policy review committee and there was no consensus reached on this policy by the committee. The Board elected to move forward with the proposed policy version that was posted on the agenda for consideration. A lengthy Board discussion took place with support and nonsupport of this proposed policy. The proposed new policy will be posted to the HCPS website for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment. Following the 30 days, Board approval of the recommended proposed new Board policy Display of Flags will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item I. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson's comments were provided.

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that kindergarten registration will be available online Friday, March 1, 2024.

Superintendent Bulson thanked the Harford County Education Foundation for supporting the "Littles University" with Ms. Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications who read the February book to the play groups at the Judy Center.

Superintendent Bulson recognized the P-Tech students at Joppatowne High School for being sworn in as federal employees who will now embark on a paid internship and gain hands-on experience.

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that Ms. Tracy Papinchock, Librarian at Patterson Mill Middle/High School, has been nominated and is one of eleven finalists for the 2024 Maryland School Librarian of the Year award by the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL). The recipient of the award will be announced in May 2024.

Superintendent Bulson shared that students interested in cyber security opportunities were able to attend a guest speaker series at Joppatowne High School where they got to hear from the following experts in this area Brigadier General Barker, Mr. Doug Jeruzal, and Lieutenant General Charles L. Moore, Jr.

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that the month of March is National Social Work month and March 3-9, 2024 is School Social Work week. Dr. Bulson thanked the HCPS dedicated School Social Workers and all the work they do to support HCPS students.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 10:13 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, FEBRUARY 26, 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 26, 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](mailto:publiccomment@hcps.org) or calling 410-588-5347.

Call-In Registrations must be received by 12:00 PM on Monday, February 26, 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 26, 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.**