

PUBLIC
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
MINUTES OF MONDAY, MAY 20, 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, May 20, 2024. Vice-President Melissa Hahn called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM

Board Members Present

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

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Motion, Second and Vote

Mrs. Alvarez 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 6-0. Ms. Bruce, Ms. Strauss, Dr. Poynton, 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 Board consensus, of the Board members present, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Ms. Bruce, Ms. Strauss, Dr. Poynton, and Miss Sabirova were absent.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Ms. Bruce, Ms. Strauss, Dr. Poynton, and Miss Sabirova, who were absent.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Staff Present:

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent
Dr. Eric Davis, Chief of Administration
Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff & Labor Relations
Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services
Eric Clark, Director of Budget
Daniel Reimers, HR Staff and Labor Relations Specialist
Kimberly H. Neal, General Counsel
Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

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

Virtual attendance: Mr. Eric Clark

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

Topic: Discussion of ratification of negotiated agreements.

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, and they addressed questions from the Board that pertained to the ratification of contract agreements with the bargaining units. Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, and Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, were also available for this discussion.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mr. Sewell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Alvarez, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:25 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 with the exception of Ms. Carol Bruce, who was absent.

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

Virtual attendance: Miss Madina Sabirova

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 Mrs. Kocher and adopted in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-President Hahn led the Pledge of Allegiance

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 nine (9) people registered and provided in-person public comment: David Bauer, Tracy Masur, Phillip Hunter, Cindy Poper, Jacob Bennett, Barbara Stan, Tom Piddington representing the group “Black Robe Regiment”, Suzie Scott representing the group “Moms for Liberty Harford County”, and Christina Lanocha. 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: Rebecca Miller.

Board Member Comments

Board member comments were provided.

Old Business

After Board discussion on this item, President Poynton called for a motion to approve the following old business item:

1. Decision on Previously Tabled: Approval of Renewal of College and Career Planning Software

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve old business item one (1) “Decision on Previously Tabled: Approval of Renewal of College and Career Planning Software” premium edition. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry. The motion passed in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

Item A. Consent Agenda

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

1. Monthly Personnel Report - April 2024
2. Ratification of AFSCME, AHCATSP, HCEA-ESP, and HCEA Tentative Agreements:
 - American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
 - Association of Harford County Administrative, Technical, and Supervisory Professionals (AHCATSP)
 - Harford County Education Association Education Support Professionals (HCEA-ESP)
 - Harford County Education Association Certificated (HCEA)
3. School/Organization Sponsored Project - Edgewood Elementary School Department of Public Works Tree Planting and Meadow Establishment
4. Contract Award: Refuse and Recycling Collection Services
5. Contract Award: Primary Math Resources
6. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: February 26, 2024 and March 18, 2024

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry and the consent agenda was approved in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

New Business

Item B. Presentation on Gifted Education Citizens Advisory Committee

Dr. Martha Barwick, Supervisor of Innovation in Learning, Ms. Molly Joyner, Gifted & Talented Teacher, and Miss Kayla Parker, Student Representative, presented to the Board an update on the Gifted Education Citizens Advisory Committee. The committee is charged with studying the research surrounding giftedness and twice exceptionality and recommend ways to infuse best practices into the manner in which students identified as gifted are served. An overview of the committee’s membership, gifted identification process, process for acceleration, and the review of a newly developed data dashboard to assist in gifted identification, was provided.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item C. Presentation of Proposed, Revised, Renamed Board Policy 0022-000 Student Behavior Intervention-Use of Physical Restraint and Exclusion

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, Ms. Colleen Sasdelli, Director of Special Education, and Ms. Stephanie Swisher, Coordinator Special Education, presented to the Board information regarding the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy 0022-000 Student Behavior Intervention-Use of Physical Restraint and Exclusion. The proposed changes to this policy have been made to acknowledge and require compliance with COMAR 13A.08.04 *et seq.* titled “Student Behavior Interventions.” Seclusion is defined and noted to be prohibited from Harford County Public Schools. The policy format has been updated to include purpose, definitions, and statement of 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, revised, renamed Board Policy 0022-000 Student Behavior Intervention-Use of Physical Restraint and Exclusion will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Meeting Break

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

Item D. Decision on Use of Rate Stabilization Surplus

Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, presented the Board background information on the surplus beyond the funding requirements in the Harford County Health Care Consortium Rate Stabilization accounts. Ms. Judd reported that as of March 31, 2024, the projected current year-end fund balance was approximately \$49.6 million, which is approximately 8.1% of the operating budget. Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) recognizes this is a healthy and unprecedented fund balance, it is likely some of these funds will be needed in future years as federal grant funds expire, inflation continues, and budgetary constraints exist. In the event HCPS has a healthcare call, the rate stabilization account will be used to remit these funds. However, per the consortium MOU, HCPS is required to return the balance to the minimum required at the time the call is paid. Due to this requirement, HCPS recommends an assignment of \$5.0 million for a healthcare call. After discussion, Ms. Judd sought Board approval of the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the use of funds as described.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Hahn made a motion, seconded by Ms. Strauss, to approve the use of funds as presented. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

Item E. Decision on Transfers Between State Categories for the FY2024 Budget

Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget presented the Board the following proposed inter-category transfers from fixed charges to the following state categories for total expenditures through June 30, 2024:

- Instructional Salaries
- Non-Public Placements
- Instructional Supplies and Materials

Ms. Judd sought Board approval of the Superintendent's recommendation of the inter-category budget transfers in the amount of \$4,000,000.00, in accordance with Section 5-105 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Perry, to approve the inter-category budget transfers as presented. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

Item F. Decision on Transfer of Funds Between Capital Projects

Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Mr. Cornell Brown, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, shared with the Board that projects that are complete or are near completion, the appropriated balances are available to be transferred to other facility improvement requirements. Six projects are completed and/or are close to completion and have remaining balances of \$2,006,499.61. These funds will be transferred to six projects as described effective July 1, 2024, with the adoption of the FY2025 Capital Budget and Improvement Program for Harford County.

Ms. Judd sought Board approval of the Superintendent's recommendation of the fund transfers to Harford County so they may include them as amendments to the FY2025 Capital Budget and Improvement Program.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kocher, to approve the fund transfers of \$2,006,499.61 to Harford County government, to be included as amended in the FY2025 Capital Budget and Improvement Program, as presented. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 9-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce was absent.

Item G. Presentation on Quarterly Financials for Period Ending March 31, 2024

The Board received a presentation on the quarterly financial report for the period ending March 31, 2024, from Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services. The report included detailed analysis of revenues, expenditures, and projections to year-end. Highlights shared by Ms. Judd were as follows:

- Revenues – Total revenue received to-date is 77.7% of budget.
- Expenditures – Total expenditures are 72.8% of the appropriation.
- Projected surplus for FY2024 is \$29.0 million
 - Projected unassigned fund balance for FY2024 is \$49.6 million which takes into account the preliminary proposed use of \$5 million for the FY2025 budget.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item H. Presentation on the Proposed Prolonged State of Emergency Virtual Education Plan

Dr. Eric Davis, Chief of Administration and Ms. Heather Kutcher, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, presented to the Board the Proposed Prolonged State of Emergency Virtual Education Plan. Senate Bill (SB) 610, Chapter 804, requires each local education agency to submit a plan on or before June 1, 2024. A prolonged state of emergency means a state of emergency declared by the Governor under Title 14 of the Public Safety Article that prevents regular, in-person attendance at a public school for at least 14 consecutive school days. As directed by the Maryland State Board of Education, if there is a prolonged state of emergency that prevents regular, in-person attendance for at least 14 consecutive school days, and the county board determines virtual instruction is required, a county board shall implement its virtual education plan and transition the school or district to virtual education.

Each plan must include the following elements:

- Staffing and personnel assignment
- Student instruction
- Student assessment and learning support
- Social and emotional support
- Community communication
- Technology
- Nutritional and health services
- Return to in-person instruction

Various HCPS offices collaborated to address each of these areas and incorporate lessons learned during the virtual instruction of the 2020-2021 school year into this new, updated plan. The plan provides guidance while remaining flexible enough to respond to unforeseen circumstances that may arise during a state of emergency. A new plan must be approved and submitted to the state every two years beginning June 2024.

Item I. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent's report was provided.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 8:29 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, MAY 20, 2024

OPEN SESSION: 5:15 PM – 5:20 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: 5:20 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, May 20, 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, May 20, 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, May 20, 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.