

PUBLIC  
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
MINUTES OF MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 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, December 2, 2024. President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM

Board Members Present

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

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

Virtual Attendance: Ms. Lauren Strauss 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 Ms. Bruce and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Pazoki 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. Alvarez and approved in a voice vote of 9-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Miss Pazoki was absent.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

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

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

Virtual Attendance: Ms. Lauren Strauss and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Note: Ms. Lauren Strauss joined the meeting in-person after roll call was taken.

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 and Labor Relations

Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services

Eric Clark, Director of Budget

Daniel Reimers, Human Resources Staff and Labor Relations Specialist

Kimberly H. Neal, Esquire, General Counsel

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

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

The Board of Education met in a closed session for the purpose 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. Dan Reimers, Human Resources Staffing Specialist, were available to answer the Board's questions. Dr. Alfree sought the Board's direction and approval to proceed with the recommendations as presented and discussed. The following actions were taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Perry, giving Dr. Alfree the authority to proceed with a specific recommendation relating to a negotiation parameter option for bargaining units. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Pazoki was absent.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Kocher made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Hahn, giving Dr. Alfree approval to proceed with the proposed negotiation parameter. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 7-2. Dr. Mueller and Mr. Sewell cast the negative votes. Miss Pazoki was absent.

#### Adjournment

With no further business, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:45 PM.

#### Business Meeting

#### Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

#### Board Members Present

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, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual Attendance: Miss Sasha Pazoki and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Note: Miss Pazoki 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. Kocher made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alvarez and adopted in a voice vote of 10-0.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Terri Kocher 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 sixteen (16) people registered and provided in-person public comment: David Bauer, Jackie Johnson, Gary Johnson, William Martino, Crystal Rufenacht, Derek Noyes, Helen Miller, Bonny Knudsen, Ronnie Davis, Jeanine Cannito, Del Sellers, Cristina Lanocha, Jacob Bennett, Courtney Bounds, Dave Faby, and Aravinda Pillalamarri. There were no virtual speakers.

Board Member Comments

Board member comments were provided.

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: Weapons Detection System
2. Appointment of Harford County Public Schools Representative to The Harford Center Board of Directors
3. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: September 16, 2024 and September 23, 2024

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Kocher made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alvarez 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 B. Decision on Proposed New Boards Policy 22-0018-000 Appeals and Hearings to the Board of Education, and Deletion of Current Board Policy 22-0018-000 Hearings Before the Board of Education of Harford County or the Hearing Examiner

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel and Gregory A. Szoka, Esq., Board Counsel, sought Board approval for the deletion of the current Board policy entitled Hearings Before the Board of Education of Harford County or the Hearing Examiner and the approval of the drafted a new policy and an accompanying procedure which will assist the staff of Harford County Public Schools and the public at large with regard to the steps to appeal a decision made by the Superintendent or a Superintendent designee when it is appropriate to appeal a decision. The proposed new policy aligns with current Maryland law regarding appeals to the Board of Education of Harford County. The proposed new policy was first presented to the Board at the October 21, 2024, Board business meeting. The new policy was posted for public comment for thirty (30) days and one (1) comment was received and forwarded to the Board for review. Mrs. Hahn requested that the following non-substantive addition language be made to the new proposed policy prior to Board approval: add sentence to last paragraph of: II. Policy Statement “The Board shall be notified of substantive changes to the procedure.”

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bruce, to approve the deletion of Current Board Policy 22-0018-000 Hearings Before the Board of Education of Harford County or the Hearing Examiner and replace it with new Board Policy 22-0018-000 Appeals and Hearings to the Board of Education, with additional language as presented. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0 (Includes 1 preferential only, affirmative student member vote).

Item C. Presentation on FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program – Local Priorities

Ms. Cathy Bendis, 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 third presentation of the FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The presentation covered the local only funding needs as identified by Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) stakeholders. The needs include, but are not limited to, safety and security upgrades, technology refreshes, and addressing HCPS’ most critical compliance, facilities, and educational requirements. The presentation reviewed the results of the priority score process. HCPS will continue to work with the Board of Education and stakeholders to finalize the FY 2026 local CIP and

align the request with the operating budget. In December, Board approval will be sought for the FY 2026 Capital Improvement (local-only) funding request for submission to Harford County local government.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item D. Presentation of Proposed New Board Policy 04-0024-000 Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials

The Board received a presentation of the proposed New Board Policy 04-0024-000 Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials from Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel and Dr. Martha Barwick, Supervisor of Innovation in Learning. This policy will affirm the commitment of Harford County Public Schools to follow the guidance and expectations set by the Maryland State Department of Education as well as applicable laws concerning the selection and approval of school library media materials. 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 04-0024-000 Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item E. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Bulson made the community aware that the Maryland State Board of Education will be releasing the Maryland Accountability Report Card data – star ratings on Tuesday, December 3, 2024.

Superintendent Bulson shared that during National Apprenticeship Week, Joppatowne High School Senior, Miss Franzy Servano, a student with the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (PTECH) program at Joppatowne High School Student, was honored by Governor Wes Moore. Miss Servano was recognized for her outstanding work in the Defense Interns program, where she is gaining real-world experience in cybersecurity and technology.

Superintendent Bulson shared that Ms. Keyonna Barnes in the Transportation Department is holding her annual toy drive this week. Donations of a new toy are being accepted for this drive at the Harford County Fleet Maintenance Facility.

Superintendent Bulson shared that Harford County Education Foundation will be sponsoring “Littles University” with a new book. Dr. Bulson encouraged registration to participate in this program to receive a free book. Further information can be found by visiting the HCPS Facebook page for a special message from Manager of Communications, Ms. Jillian Lader.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 8:42 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, DECEMBER 2, 2024

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 6:00 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 – 4:55 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 5:55 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, December 2, 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, December 2, 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, December 2, 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 for individuals 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.**