

PUBLIC  
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
MINUTES OF MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023

*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, April 17, 2023. President Carol Mueller called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Mrs. Diane Alvarez and Ms. Noa Blanken, who were absent.

In-person attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, Dr. Joyce Herold, Mrs. Denise Perry, Dr. Roy Phillips, Mr. Wade Sewell, and Dr. Carol Mueller

Virtual attendance: Ms. Patrice Ricciardi

Motion, Second and Vote

Dr. Phillips 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. Hahn and approved in a voice vote 8-0. Mrs. Alvarez and Ms. Noa Blanken were absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(1) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Dr. Phillips, seconded by Ms. Hahn and by unanimous vote of the Board members present, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Mrs. Diane Alvarez and Ms. Noa Blanken, who were absent.

In-person attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, Dr. Joyce Herold, Mrs. Denise Perry, Dr. Roy Phillips, Mr. Wade Sewell, and Dr. Carol Mueller

Virtual attendance: Ms. Patrice Ricciardi

Staff Present:

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent

Dr. Eric Davis, Chief of Administration

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

In-person attendance: Dr. Sean Bulson, Dr. Eric Davis, Kimberly Neal, Esq., and Mrs. Yvonne Rallo

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

Topic: Presentation of background/qualifications of the person recommended as a candidate for the current vacancy on the Board's Ethics Panel.

Reason for Closed Session: To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of information regarding the applicant. Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., led a discussion regarding the proposed candidate for the current vacancy on the Board's Ethics Panel.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

#### Adjournment

With no further business, Dr. Phillips motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Perry, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 6:03 PM.

#### Business Meeting

##### Call to Order / Roll Call

President Mueller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Roll call was taken. All Board members were present.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Carol Bruce, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, Dr. Joyce Herold, Mrs. Denise Perry, Dr. Roy Phillips, Ms. Noa Blanken, Mr. Wade Sewell, and Dr. Carol Mueller

Virtual attendance: Ms. Patrice Ricciardi

##### Adoption of Agenda

President Mueller called for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Amendment, Second and Vote – Mrs. Alvarez made a motion to amend the agenda by removing item number one (1) “Ratification of HCEA Tentative Agreements” from the consent agenda and moving it to a subsequent meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn. Board discussion followed. President Muller called for the vote, ending the discussion. The motion failed with two (2) affirmative and eight (8) negative roll call votes. Casting the affirmative votes: Mrs. Alvarez and Mrs. Hahn. Casting the negative votes: Ms. Bruce, Dr. Herold, Mrs. Perry, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Ricciardi, Ms. Blanken, Mr. Sewell, and Dr. Mueller (Includes 1 preferential negative student member vote).

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Blanken made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry and adopted in a voice vote 9-1 (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Alvarez.

##### Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-President Sewell led the Pledge of Allegiance

##### Item A. Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School Safety Patrol Presentation

Ms. Christina Douglas, Principal of Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School, Mr. Kenneth Brannon, School Safety Liaison, and fourth and fifth grade students from Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School, presented the Board their school's “Safety Patrol Program.” This year Hall's Cross Roads adopted the Triple A Student Safety Patrol program as an opportunity for student leadership in the school.

##### Item B. Board Member Comments

Board member comments were provided.

##### Item C. Public Comments

Speakers were invited to the meeting to provide their comments for the record either in-person or virtually. President Mueller 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 seventeen (17) people registered to provide in-person public comment: David Bauer, Renee DeBiase, Cheryl Adams, Rachel DeLaughter, Susan Deeney, Gary Johnson, Jackie Johnson, William Martino, Benjamin Heiser, Stella Peters, Suzie Scott representing the group “Moms for Liberty Harford County”, Boluwatife (Sam) Oje, Emma Peller, DeLane Lewis, Cristina Lanocho, Charles Hicks, and Bernadette Zgorski. 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 and provided virtual public comment: Crystal Parks.

#### Item D. Consent Agenda

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

1. Ratification of HCEA Tentative Agreements
  - Harford County Education Association (Certificated Bargaining Unit)
  - HCEA Tentative Agreement
  - Harford County Education Association (Certificated Bargaining Unit and Education Support Professionals)
  - HCEA Certificated and ESP Agreements
2. Resolution of Pastor Mark Nolan's Service on the Ethics Panel of the Board of Education of Harford County

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Blanken made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Dr. Herold. Ms. Alvarez requested that item number one (1) be removed for discussion. The consent agenda was approved with only item number two (2) “Resolution of Pastor Mark Nolan's Service on the Ethics Panel of the Board of Education of Harford County, in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Consent Item #1 Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion to approve consent agenda item number one (1) “Ratification of HCEA Tentative Agreements”. The motion was seconded by Ms. Blanken. Board discussion followed. President Muller called for the vote, ending the discussion. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 9-1 (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Alvarez.

#### Item E. Decision on Recommendation of Candidate for the Ethics Panel Position for the Board of Education of Harford County

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel presented background information for the five (5) member Ethics Panel. There is one vacancy with respect to the panel. This vacancy occurred with the end of the service term of Pastor Mark Nolan. Advertisement of the vacancy was posted, and two (2) candidates submitted letters of interest along with a resume and both candidates were interviewed. The selected candidate will serve a five (5) year term on the Board's Ethics Panel.

A Board discussion followed with Mrs. Alvarez stating her concern of ensuring there is a good diversity of individuals on the ethics panel for the role they are tasked to fill. Dr. Phillips called for the vote, ending the discussion.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mr. Sewell made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommended selection of Irene “Niki” Wiggins, Esquire, to the Board's Ethics Panel, for a five-year term beginning April 17, 2023, and ending April 17, 2028. The motion was seconded by Dr. Herold and approved with 8 affirmative and 1 negative roll call votes. Casting the affirmative votes: Ms. Bruce, Dr. Herold, Mrs. Perry, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Ricciardi, Ms. Blanken, Mr. Sewell, and Dr. Mueller (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Hahn. A vote was not provided by Mrs. Alvarez. Mrs. Alvarez did not voice an affirmative vote, a negative vote, or verbally abstain from voting.

#### Item F. Decision on Proposed Revisions to Board Policy 14-0007-000 Assault Leave

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, presented information regarding proposed revisions to Board Policy 14-0007-000 Assault Leave. The proposed revisions to the policy were presented to the Board at the February 27, 2023 Board meeting to ensure alignment between the policy and the applicable assault leave statute, the Education Article of the Maryland Code, § 6-111. The proposed revised policy was posted on the HCPS website for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment and no comments were received. Ms. Neal sought Board approval of the recommended proposed revisions to Board Policy 14-0007-000 Assault Leave.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blanken, to approve the proposed, revised policy entitled 14-0007-000 Assault Leave as presented. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item G. Decision on Proposed Revisions to Board Policy 12-0001-000 Ethics

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel presented information regarding proposed revisions to Board Policy 12-0001-000 Ethics. At the March 13, 2023, Board business meeting, the Superintendent recommended revisions to the current Board Ethics policy required in order for the current policy to be compliant with the State Ethics Law and the Ethics Commission's model policy. The policy was posted for public comment and one comment was received and distributed to Board members for review. A Board discussion followed with Mrs. Alvarez asking the Board to consider the substantive comments that were submitted by one community member prior to voting on the policy. Ms. Bruce called for the vote, ending the discussion.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mr. Sewell made a motion, seconded by Dr. Herold, to accept the proposed revisions to Board Policy 12-0001-000 Ethics. The motion was approved with 8 affirmative and 1 negative roll call votes. Casting the affirmative votes: Ms. Bruce, Dr. Herold, Mrs. Perry, Dr. Phillips, Ms. Ricciardi, Ms. Blanken, Mr. Sewell, and Dr. Mueller (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Alvarez. Mrs. Hahn abstained from voting.

Second Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Bruce made a motion, seconded by Dr. Herold, to approve for the Policy Committee to receive the substantive comments provided by the one community member for review and bring that information back to the Board for consideration on this Board Policy 12-0001-000 Ethics. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0 (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote).

Item H. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson's report was provided as follows:

Superintendent Bulson congratulated Ms. Madina Sabirova for being elected as the incoming Student Member of the Board for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year.

Superintendent Bulson congratulated Mr. Michael Brogley, Social Studies teacher at C. Milton Wright High School for being named the 2023 Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Teacher of the Year. Dr. Bulson also congratulated the four (4) other finalists that were nominated for Teacher of the Year.

Superintendent Bulson provided the community information on the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) FY2024 Budget. Dr. Bulson shared that on Friday, April 14, 2023, Harford County Executive, Bob Cassilly released his first county budget. Mr. Cassilly's proposed budget is \$19.4 million less than what HCPS received this year and \$39 million less than what HCPS requested to sustain current operations. Mr. Cassilly's proposed budget is cutting the HCPS budget by one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per student. Dr. Bulson shared that the proposed cuts to the HCPS budget will impact classroom sizes by having more students per classroom, students who participate in athletics will need to pay athletic participation fees, and teacher salaries will not be competitive with neighboring counties making it difficult to remain competitive with staffing and retention efforts to ensure students have the best teacher at the front of their classrooms. HCPS asked for \$19 million more than what was received last year. This amount would only cover the increase in salary costs and the athletic fees. Mr. Cassilly gave HCPS \$19.4 million less than what was received last year, which totals \$39 million less than what is needed to maintain the status quo; not enhance HCPS students' experiences. This is an option no county executive has chosen to exercise in recent decades. Over the next few weeks Dr. Bulson plans to work with his administration to identify ways to balance the budget and will be appealing to the Harford County Council for help on encouraging some changes to the proposed County Executive's budget. The County Council will have budget hearings, opportunities for input, and their normal meetings, they will then vote to approve a budget. HCPS does not know what the final product will be after that. Once HCPS receives the County Council's budget, Dr. Bulson will come back to the Board with recommendations on what changes HCPS will make in

order to balance the budget. The Board will then vote on the proposed recommendations. HCPS needs to have a balanced budget by June 30, 2023.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

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

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Carol L. Mueller, Ph. D.  
Board President, Board of Education of Harford County



**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PARTICIPATION  
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023**

**OPEN SESSION: 5:45 PM – 5:50 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 6:30 PM meeting.

\*The only item the Board will consider during this open meeting is consideration of meeting in a closed session.

**CLOSED SESSION: 5:50 PM – 6:15 PM**

**BUSINESS MEETING: 6:30 PM – ADJOURNMENT**

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

**DOORS WILL OPEN AT 6:20 PM AND THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 6:30 PM**

The Board of Education of Harford County will hold a hybrid Business Meeting on Monday, April 17, 2023, at 6:30 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, April 17, 2023. 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 6:30 PM on Monday, April 17, 2023.
- 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.**