

PUBLIC  
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY  
MINUTES OF MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025

*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, March 10, 2025. President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM

Board Members Present

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

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

Virtual Attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Lauren Strauss, 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 Mr. Sewell and approved in a voice vote of 8-0. Miss Pazoki and Ms. Bruce were absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(2)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Mrs. Kocher, seconded by Mr. Sewell and approved in a voice vote of 8-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Miss Pazoki and Ms. Bruce were absent.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

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

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

Virtual Attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez, Ms. Lauren Strauss, and Mrs. Melissa Hahn

Staff Present:

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent

Dr. Eric Davis, Deputy Superintendent for Operations

Dr. Dyann Mack, Deputy Superintendent for Academics

Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Kimberly H. Neal, Esquire, General Counsel

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

In-person attendance: Dr. Sean Bulson, Dr. Eric Davis, Dr. Dyann Mack, Mr. Ben Richardson, Kimberly Neal, Esq., and Mrs. Yvonne Rallo

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

Topic: Presentation of confidential information regarding recommended employee discipline and to seek Board action.  
Reason for Closed Session: To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of information regarding the specific individual employee.

Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, presented the Board information on an individual employee and sought Board approval of the recommended employee discipline matter.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Perry to approve the recommended employee discipline as presented. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 8-0. Miss Pazoki and Ms. Bruce were absent.

Topic: To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice

Reason for Closed Session: To obtain legal advice on a sensitive matter

Kimberly Neal, Esq., General Counsel, led a discussion and updated the Board on a sensitive matter.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

#### Adjournment

With no further business, Dr. Mueller motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sewell, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:49 PM.

#### Business Meeting

##### Call to Order / Roll Call

President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 6:03 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, Miss Sasha Pazoki, 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 virtually after roll call was taken. Ms. Strauss was not present during the Board action items.

##### 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 Mrs. Kocher and adopted in a voice vote of 9-0. Ms. Strauss was absent.

##### Pledge of Allegiance

Miss Sasha Pazoki, Student Member of the Board, led the Pledge of Allegiance

##### Harford County Public Schools Student Presentations

Dr. Paula Stanton, Supervisor of Culture & Climate, introduced the students from Harford County Public Schools who presented to the Board. The Board received presentations from the following schools and topics: Deerfield Elementary School students presented living wax museum and research projects, Harford Technical High School students presented cosmetology program projects, and Bel Air Middle School students presented art projects.

##### 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 twelve (12) people registered and provided in-person public comment: David Bauer, William Martino, representing the group "Moms for Liberty", Crystal Rufenacht, Neil Thompson, representing the group "Together We Will", Jennifer Kline, representing the group "Harford County Association of Librarians", Jackie Johnson, David Faby, Bonny Knudsen, Thomas Piddington,

representing the group, “Black Robed Regiment”, Heather Cantos – on behalf of Harford County Councilman Jacob Bennett, Charles Hicks, and Tina Lanocha. 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. Monthly Personnel Report: January/February 2025
2. Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10
3. Contract Award: Network Devices
4. Contract Award: Surplus and Access Easement for the Havre de Grace Activity Youth/Senior Center
5. Contract Award: Subsurface Exploration & Geotechnical Engineering Services for the New Combination Harford Academy and Elementary School
6. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: November 18, December 2, and December 16, 2024

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Alvarez made a motion to approve consent agenda items number 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6; and remove item “2. Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10” for Board discussion. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kocher and the consent agenda was approved with the removal of “Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10” in a voice vote of 7-1. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Bruce cast the negative vote. Mrs. Perry abstained from voting and Ms. Strauss was absent.

#### Consent Item #2. Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Bruce made a motion to approve consent item “2. Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10”. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mueller and consent item “2. Contract Award: Secondary English Program Grades 6-10” was approved in a voice vote of 8-1. Mrs. Hahn cast a negative vote. (Includes 1 preferential affirmative student member vote). Ms. Strauss was absent.

#### Meeting Break

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

#### New Business

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

Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel and Dr. Martha Barwick, Supervisor of Innovation in Learning, presented the Board with a revised draft of the Board policy on evaluating and selecting school library materials. The original draft was reviewed by the Board’s Policy Review Committee and presented at the December 10, 2024 Board meeting. After being posted for public input, the policy was updated based on feedback from the public and Board. The current version reflects these revisions. The Board paused movement on this policy and did not make formal action. The Board will continue further discussion with small groups about this policy.

#### Item C. Presentation of Harford County Public Schools Academic Performance: Maryland Report Card 2023-24

Ms. Heather Kutcher, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. Andrew Renzulli, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Mr. Philip Snyder, Supervisor of Accountability, and Mr. Andy Wachter, Assistant Supervisor of Accountability updated the Board on the release of the Maryland Report Card results for Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) from the 2023-2024 school year. A three-year trend of HCPS performance was shown, as well as a comparison to select counties within Maryland. The following measures were presented: academic achievement based on MCAP results for English/language arts literacy and mathematics; academic progress results based on MCAP;

English language proficiency results based on the W-ACCESS assessment; high school graduation rates; readiness for postsecondary success; chronic absenteeism rates; climate survey results for educators and students; and access to a well-rounded curriculum.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item D. Presentation of Proposed New Board Policy: Telehealth

The Board received a presentation from Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services and Ms. Pamela Smith, Homeless Liaison, on the proposed new Board policy titled "Telehealth". Mr. Hennigan and Ms. Smith gave background information on House Bill (HB) 522 which was passed during the 2024 legislative session. This bill requires school systems to allow students to engage in telehealth appointments during the school day. Each school district is required to develop a policy and accompanying procedures to be in compliance with this law by July 1, 2025. Board discussed and a change was made to the proposed new policy to add under "I. Purpose" at the end of the sentence the following: "with parental /guardian consent" The proposed 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 proposed new policy "Telehealth" will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item E. Presentation of Proposed, Revised, and Renamed Board Policy 02-0006-000 Education of Homeless Students

The Board received a presentation from Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services and Ms. Pamela Smith, Homeless Liaison, on the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy 02-0006-000 Education of Homeless Students to "McKinney-Vento Education Program". The principal purpose of the proposed changes to the policy is to reflect the change in the law, rename the policy to align with MSDE regulation, define responsibilities in accordance with the law, and identify the proper statutes under which the education of students experiencing homelessness will be implemented in accordance with federal and state law and regulation. The proposed revised 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 proposed revise, and renamed Board policy to "02-0006-000 McKinney-Vento Education Program", will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item F. Presentation of Proposed Revised, Renamed Board Policy 02-0039-000 Student Rights and Responsibilities- Searches of Students-Search and Seizure by School Personnel Retitled to Search and Seizure

The Board received a presentation from Mr. Donovan Brooks, Supervisor of Safety and Security and Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, on the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy 02-0039-000 Student Rights and Responsibilities-Searches of Students-Search and Seizure by School Personnel retitled to "Search and Seizure". Due to the extent of the proposed revisions to the original policy, it was decided that drafting a new policy would be more efficient. The last time this policy was approved by the Board was at the September 13, 2004, Board meeting. For additional clarity, it was determined that this policy should be retitled to "Search and Seizure". The proposed revised and retitled 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 proposed revised, and renamed Board policy, will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item G. Presentation of Proposed Board Policy 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use

Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton and Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, presented the Board proposed policy titled: 02-0037-000 Student Backpack Use, for the use and storage of backpacks, bags, and similar items to promote the safety and security of students and staff of Harford County Public Schools (HCPS). Dr. Poynton shared that the proposed policy will be posted on the HCPS website for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment. Following the 30 days, Board approval of the proposed policy will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item H. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson provided his report.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:37 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, MARCH 10, 2025

**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 – 5:55 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, March 10, 2025, 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, March 10, 2025. 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, March 10, 2025.
- 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.**