

PUBLIC
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
MINUTES OF MONDAY, APRIL 14, 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, April 14, 2025. President Aaron Poynton called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM

Board Members Present

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

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

Virtual Attendance: Mrs. Diane Alvarez and Ms. Carol Bruce

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 Mrs. Hahn and approved in a voice vote of 9-0. Miss Pazoki was absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(1) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Mrs. Kocher, seconded by Mrs. Hahn 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, Mrs. Terri Kocher, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Ms. Lauren Strauss, Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Dr. Aaron Poynton

Virtual Attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce

Note: Mrs. Alvarez joined the closed session in person after roll call was taken.

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

Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

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

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

Topic: Presentation of background/qualifications of candidate nominated by the Superintendent for the position of Assistant Supervisor of Mathematics

Reason for Closed Session: To preserve the privacy and confidentiality of information regarding the nominee.

Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, led a discussion and presentation regarding the proposed candidate for the Assistant Supervisor of Mathematics position.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Adjournment

With no further business, Mrs. Alvarez 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 6:02 PM.

Board Members Present

Roll call was taken. All Board members were present.

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

Virtual Attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce

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. Alvarez and adopted in a voice vote of 10-0.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-President Hahn led the Pledge of Allegiance

Harford County Public Schools Student Recognition

Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton, introduced Bel Air Elementary School Student, Miss Alexis Hoagland. Miss Hoagland was recognized by the Board and Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent of Schools, for her contribution by participating in the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Cell Phone Policy reminder video that explained why this policy is so important.

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 all speakers; both individuals and those representing groups, would have three (3) 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 ten (10) people registered and provided in-person public comment: William Martino, Jen Davis, Shawn Loper, Cristina Lanocha, James Ramsey, Thomas Piddington, Charles Hicks, Heather Geddes, and Derek Noyes*. 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: De'Von Moore

*Note: Derek Noyes preregistered to provide public comment but did not present himself when his name was called.

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: March 2025
2. Contract Award: Benefits Enrollment Services
3. Contract Award: Playground Maintenance Supplies
4. Contract Award: Facility MRO, Industrial, and Building-Related Supplies and Equipment
5. Contract Award: USDA Processed Commodities
6. Minutes of Previous Board Meetings: March 10 and March 24, 2025

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller 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).

New Business

Item B. Decision on Administrative and Supervisory Appointments

Mr. Ben Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, sought Board approval of the proposed candidate for the position of Assistant Supervisor of Mathematics.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sewell, to approve Mr. Brett J. Parker, for the position of Assistant Supervisor of Mathematics. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 9-1. Mrs. Hahn cast a negative vote. (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Item C. Decision on Kindergarten Science Curriculum

Ms. Heather Kutcher, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Diane Engelman, Supervisor of Science and Ms. Amy Ryan, Curriculum Specialist in Elementary Science, presented the Board information regarding the Kindergarten Science Curriculum. After presentation and Board discussion and questions, Board approval of the Kindergarten Science Curriculum for implementation in the 2025-2026 school year was sought. The following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mr. Sewell made a motion to approve the Kindergarten Science Curriculum, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Perry. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 9-1. Mrs. Alvarez cast a negative vote. (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Item D. Decision on English for Speakers of Other Languages III Curriculum

Ms. Heather Kutcher, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Chandra Krantz, Supervisor of the Office of Multilingual Instruction, Mr. Juraj Duracka, Teacher Specialist, and Ms. Erin Steelman, Curriculum Specialist, presented the Board information regarding the English for Speakers of Other Languages III Curriculum. After presentation and Board discussion and questions, Board approval of the English for Speakers of Other Languages III Curriculum was sought. The following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion to approve the English for Speakers of Other Languages III Curriculum, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sewell. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0 (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Meeting Break

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

Item E. Decision Board Policy: Student Telehealth Access

Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services and Ms. Pamela Smith, Homeless Liaison, presented the Board information regarding the Board policy titled "Student Telehealth Access Policy." This

proposed policy was posted for public comment on HCPS.org for 30 days. After presentation and Board discussion and questions, Board approval of the proposed policy “Student Telehealth Access” was sought. The following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Ms. Strauss made a motion to table the decision of Board policy titled “Student Telehealth Access.” The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hahn. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 6-4. Ms. Bruce, Dr. Mueller, Mrs. Perry, and Mr. Sewell cast negative votes. (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Item F. Decision on Proposed, Revised, and Renamed Board Policy 02-0006-000 McKinney-Vento Education Program
Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services and Ms. Pamela Smith, Homeless Liaison, presented the Board information regarding the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy titled “02-0006-000 McKinney-Vento Education Program”. This proposed policy was posted for public comment on HCPS.org for 30 days. After presentation and Board discussion and questions, Board approval of the proposed policy “McKinney-Vento Education Program” was sought. The following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Bruce made a motion to approve the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy titled “McKinney-Vento Education Program,” as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mueller. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0 (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Item G. Decision on Proposed Revised, Renamed Board Policy 02-0039-000 Search and Seizure
Mr. Donovan Brooks, Supervisor of Safety and Security and Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel, presented the Board information regarding the proposed, revised, and retitled Board policy “Search and Seizure.” For additional clarity, it was determined that this policy should be retitled to “Search and Seizure.” This proposed policy was posted for public comment on HCPS.org for 30 days. After presentation and Board discussion and questions, Board approval of the proposed policy “Search and Seizure” was sought. The following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Mrs. Kocher made a motion to approve the proposed, revised, and renamed Board policy titled “Search and Seizure,” as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alvarez. The motion was approved in a voice vote of 10-0 (Includes 1 preferential only affirmative student member vote).

Item H. Presentation of Proposed Board Policy 02-0037-000 Student Backpack/Bag Use
Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton, Mr. Mike O’Brien, Executive Director of Middle & High School Performance, and Kimberly H. Neal, Esq., General Counsel presented information on the proposed Board policy entitled “02-0037-000 Student Backpack/Bag Use”. Board discussion took place with support and nonsupport of this proposed policy. This proposed policy will be posted on HCPS.org for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment. Following the 30 days, Board approval of the recommended proposed Board policy “Student Backpack/Bag Use” will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item I. Presentation of Harford County Public Schools Academic Performance: Attendance and Behavior
Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, Ms. Natalie Holloway, Director of Middle School Innovation, Mr. Tom Smith, Director of Elementary School Instruction and Performance, and Mr. Buzz Williams, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, updated the Board on several new initiatives that have been put in place to increase attendance and decrease behavioral incidents. The presentation included data that shows Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has made great gains in both of these areas. HCPS students attend school regularly at a rate higher than the state average. HCPS has the fifth lowest chronic absenteeism rate in the state of Maryland. HCPS has also made gains in reducing the number of behavioral incidents of students across the school system. Since the 2021-22 school year, behavioral incidents have been reduced, and as a result, less students are suspended and are attending school more regularly.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item J. Presentation of Proposed Revised Board Policy 06-0005-000 Portable Communication Devices

Board President, Dr. Aaron Poynton introduced Board policy entitled, "06-0005-000 Portable Communication Devices". A discussion with the Board ensued and changes to the policy were proposed. This proposed policy will be posted on HCPS.org for thirty (30) days to allow for public comment. Following the 30 days, Board approval of the recommended proposed revised Board policy "Portable Communication Devices" will be sought at a subsequent Board Meeting.

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item K. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bulson provided his report.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 9:44 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, APRIL 14, 2025

OPEN SESSION: 5:00 PM – 5:05 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: 5:05 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, April 14, 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 or calling 410-588-5347.

Call-In Registrations must be received by 12:00 PM on Monday, April 14, 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, April 14, 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:

There are several business items on this April 14, 2025, agenda. In order to complete scheduled business, the Board president will limit each speakers allocated time to no more than three (3) minutes for individuals and individuals representing groups.

- 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.