

PUBLIC
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
MINUTES OF MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026

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, January 12, 2026. Acting President Paige called the meeting to order at 4:47 PM

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Mr. James McVicker who was absent.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mark Korn Esq., Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Ms. Lauren Paige

Virtual attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce, and Mrs. Diane Alvarez

Motion, Second and Vote

Mrs. Hahn 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. Alvarez and approved in a voice vote of 7-1. Mr. Korn cast a negative vote. Mr. McVicker was absent.

Pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(7)(9) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and upon a motion by Mrs. Hahn, seconded by Mr. Sewell and approved in a voice vote 8-0, the Board of Education of Harford County met in closed session in a hybrid fashion. Mr. McVicker was absent.

Closed Session

Board Members Present

All Board members were present with the exception of Mr. James McVicker who was absent.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mark Korn Esq., Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Ms. Lauren Paige

Virtual attendance: Ms. Carol Bruce, and Mrs. Diane Alvarez

Staff Present:

Dr. Dyann Mack, Acting Superintendent
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
Bernard Hennigan, Acting Deputy Superintendent for Academics
Katie Ridgway, Chief of Staff
Gregory A. Szoka, Esquire, Board Counsel
Yvonne Rallo, Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary

In-person attendance: Dr. Dyann Mack, Mr. Ben Richardson, Dr. Mae Alfree, Ms. Deborah Judd, Mr. Eric Clark, Mr. Bernard Hennigan, Ms. Katie Ridgway, Gregory Szoka, 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, was joined by Dr. Mae Alfree, Director of Staff and Labor Relations, Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, and Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, to answer the Board's questions. Mr. Richardson sought the Board's direction and approval to proceed with the recommended parameters as presented and discussed. The following actions were taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Perry, giving Dr. Alfree the authority to proceed with a specific requested adjustment to a negotiation parameter for a specific bargaining unit. The motion was approved in a roll-call vote of 8-0. Mr. McVicker was absent.

Note: Dr. Mack, Mr. Richardson, Dr. Alfree, Ms. Judd, Mr. Clark, Mr. Hennigan, and Ms. Ridgway, were excused from the following discussion.

Topic: To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice

Reason for Closed Session: To discuss with legal counsel on a sensitive personnel matter
Acting President Paige introduced the discussion to the Board and sought Board counsel input for discussion and possible decision on the discussed matter. After Board dialogue with counsel the following action was taken.

Motion, Second and Vote – Dr. Mueller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Perry, to approve the public release of a specific independent party investigation report. The motion was approved in a roll-call vote of 8-0. Mr. McVicker was absent.

Adjournment

With no further business, and with Board consensus, the closed session adjourned at 5:55 PM.

Business Meeting

Call to Order / Roll Call

Acting President Lauren Paige called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Roll call was taken. All Board members were present.

In-person attendance: Mrs. Denise Perry, Mr. Wade Sewell, Dr. Carol Mueller, Mr. James McVicker, Mark Korn Esq., Mrs. Melissa Hahn, and Ms. Lauren Paige

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

Adoption of Agenda

Acting President Paige 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 Mr. Sewell and adopted in a voice vote of 9-0.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. McVicker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Member Comments

Board member comments were provided.

Old Business

Acting President Paige announced no "Old Business" was scheduled for discussion.

New Business

Item A. Decision on Proposed 2026-2027 Harford County Public Schools Calendar

The Board received a presentation from Ms. Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications, on the proposed 2026-2027 Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) calendar. Ms. Lader shared that the membership of the 2026-2027 Calendar Committee was approved by the Board at the August 18, 2025, Board meeting. The committee met on September 4, 2025, and presented draft calendar proposals to the Board at the September 22, 2025 Board meeting. The proposals were posted for 60 days of public comment and feedback. The Calendar Committee met on November 24, 2025, to review stakeholder input and provide a recommended 2026-2027 Calendar to the Board. The presented 180-day student/190-day teacher calendar contained the following features:

- New teachers report on Thursday, August 20, 2026.
- Returning teachers report on Monday, August 24, 2026.
- School begins for students (grade 1 through grade 12) on Monday, August 31, 2026.
- School begins for kindergarten students on Wednesday, September 2, 2026.
- School begins for pre-kindergarten students on Wednesday, September 9, 2026.
- Quarter end dates:
 - November 5, 2026
 - January 28, 2027
 - April 8, 2027
 - June 10, 2027

Discussion took place, with Board members considering the Calendar Committee's proposed HCPS 2026-2027 school calendar and the following Board requests to the proposed calendar were noted: December 23, 2026, will be an early dismissal day for staff. The last day of school for students will be an early dismissal, and Kindergarten will have a different first day of school than PreK and grades 1–12. After the Board amendments to the proposed calendar were noted, the following action took place.

Motion, Second and Vote of Full Calendar with Agreed Amendments – Mr. Sewell made a motion, seconded by Dr. Mueller, to approve the proposed 2026-2027 Harford County Public Schools Calendar, with the agreed amendments, as presented. The motion was approved in a roll call vote of 8-1. Casting the negative vote: Mrs. Diane Alvarez (Includes 1 preferential only, affirmative student member vote).

Item B. Presentation of Superintendent's Proposed FY2027 Budget

Ms. Deborah Judd, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, and Mr. Eric Clark, Director of Budget, presented the proposed FY2027 Budget. The Superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2027 local request to support the unrestricted budget is \$401.5 million, an increase of \$53.9 million. The total proposed increase to the unrestricted budget is \$52.4 million, or 7.8% higher than the current budget. A salary and wage package is expected to cost \$28.3 million. Insurance and other fixed charges are expected to increase \$5.9 million. Special Education and transportation needs are expected to increase \$5.0 and \$2.3 million, respectively. The unrestricted budget proposal also includes an increase of 91.0 FTE positions. The fiscal 2027 proposed Unrestricted Operating, Restricted, and Food Service budgets are \$724.9 million, \$48.9 million, and \$23.7 million, respectively. The Capital Projects fund includes state and local funding to support capital repairs and construction. The fiscal 2027 Proposed Capital Projects fund budget is projected to be \$141.7 million. The Board of Education approved the proposed Capital budget for submission to the state and local governments on September 22, 2025 and December 15, 2025, respectively. The Superintendent recommends the Board of Education review the following proposed budgets for FY2027:

- Unrestricted Fund of \$724,893,737
- Restricted Fund of \$48,855,598
- Food Service Fund \$23,655,000

No formal action was taken by the Board.

Item C. Acting Superintendent's Report

Dr. Dyann Mack provided the Acting Superintendent's report.

Public Comments

Speakers were invited to the meeting to provide their comments for the record either in-person or virtually. Acting-President Paige 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 seven (12) people registered and provided in-person public comment: Del Sellers, David Bauer, Dave Faby, William Martino, Crystal Rufenacht, Tehreem Zahid, Cristina Lanocha, Stacy Carroll, Jeannine Cannito, Suzie Scott representing the group "Moms for Liberty-Harford County", Gary Johnson, and Greg Johnson.

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: Jill Ferrara.

Adjournment

With no further business and with Board consensus the meeting adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Dyann R. Mack, Ed. D.
Acting Superintendent of Schools and Secretary-Treasurer

Lauren Paige
Acting President, Board of Education of Harford County



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PARTICIPATION
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026

OPEN SESSION: 4:45 PM – 4:50 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 6:00 PM meeting.

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

CLOSED SESSION: 4:50 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

For this business meeting, the President has set the time on the agenda for public comment to 60 minutes total; in order to allow time for the Board to complete scheduled business.

Registered speaker's allotted time may be limited depending on the total amount of speakers that register to participate.

The Board of Education of Harford County will hold a hybrid Business Meeting on Monday, January 12, 2026, 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, January 12, 2026. 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, January 12, 2026.
- **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.