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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, August 22, 2024

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Place Henrico County School Board, Virginia
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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGajLcSFhEo>
- Official meeting portal (Henrico County Public Schools, Diligent Community): <https://henricoschools.community.diligentoneplatform.com/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx>

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[00:00:01] good afternoon today is august 22nd 2024 welcome to the henrico county school board monthly meeting also this meeting is being live streamed on the hcps website the first item on our agenda is the approval of the agenda is there a motion for approval i move that the school board approve the agenda for tonight's meeting thank you mrs kinsella is there a second second thank you mr irving all in favor say aye aye any opposed the ayes have it the agenda is approved we also want

[00:00:40] to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude to our visitors we deeply appreciate your presence and participation in our meetings your engagement is highly valued and we are delighted to have you with us today dr cashwell thank you chair atkins members of the board and visitors we'll begin our meeting as we always do with the Pledge of Allegiance, which will be followed by a moment of silence. If you would please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance

[00:01:14] to the Black of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. If you would please remain standing as you're able for a moment of silence. And that concludes our moment of silence. You may be seated. The next item on our agenda are recognitions. We'll start with recognition

[00:01:52] of the national recognition of National Suicide Prevention Month. Mrs. Shea, would you please present? Whereas youth suicide is a major public health concern and whereas suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people in ages 10 to 24 in Virginia, and ages 10 to 14 in the United States, and the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24 in the U.S., and whereas awareness of the warning signs, stress coping strategies, safety planning, and support

[00:02:31] network availability are essential to a multi-pronged approach to suicide prevention, and whereas schools serve as key settings for suicide prevention and when school personnel families and communities take an active role in suicide prevention lives can be saved and whereas hcps supports and implements comprehensive youth suicide prevention in partnership with others in our county and community to raise awareness provide education through evidence-based suicide prevention programs, provide resources and trainings, and link individuals to effective

[00:03:08] treatment through established Henrico Cares pathways. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools recognizes September 2024 as National Suicide Prevention Month, recognized by the School Board of Henrico County Public Schools this 22nd day of august 2024. thank you so much mrs shea the next area of recognition is for national hispanic heritage month mr irving would you please present this recognition whereas the hispanic and latino

[00:03:44] community stands as a diverse representation of an integral part of the innumerable historic and cultural contributions with local national and global impact and whereas vital contributions to the field of science business and agriculture politics the arts and the civil service have made been made possible by hispanic and latino americans and whereas citizens are encouraged to participate in activities that recognize appreciate and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity and the significant contributions made by hispanic and latino americans

[00:04:19] and whereas henrico county public schools and the henrico community recognize and embrace our vibrant hispanic and latino community that continues to shape and strengthen our schools our county our country and our world now therefore be it proclaimed that the school board of henrico county public schools recognizes september 15th through october 15th 2024 as national hispanic heritage month and encourages observance and celebration and the to the attention of our citizens. Recognized by the school board of Henrico County Public Schools

[00:04:57] this 22nd day of August 2024. Thank you, Mr. Irving. Dr. Cashwell. Thank you. The next item on the agenda is our Henrico highlight. This week we welcomed back 50,000 of our favorite people to our schools, our students, and as you would expect, smiles, styles, and learning can be seen everywhere.

[00:05:22] Let's take a look.

[00:08:37] The first day of school was so amazing that we did it three times this year. Power outages due to a storm and some needed electrical work meant that we experienced the thrill of back to school multiple times this week.

[00:08:55] And each day was just as magical as the first. Our success this first week of school and all year long is thanks in large part to our incredible teachers, school faculty, and support staff.

[00:09:11] At this year's convocation, I had the opportunity to spotlight several employees who embody the spirit, compassion, and commitment that make up the heart of Henrico. And it is my honor to introduce them to you tonight. Take a look.

[00:09:33] I'm a fifth grade teacher. Second grade. I've been spending my 10th year teaching. I think my thing is I love children. I love to help kids. I got my undergrad in interior design and did that for three years and just wasn't getting that internal happiness that one needs to get from their work.

[00:10:01] I enjoy having a different day every day. I enjoy being part of a student's journey. I like to learn and I like watching children learn. I like being part of that. - I think everybody should do something they love, right? This right here, every day I go in, I change somebody's life.

[00:10:18] I get to go home and get to absorb what I've learned and kind of be a better person myself. - It has been rewarding. And I know that sounds cliché, but we truly do it because we love it and we love the kids. - I think almost every day as a teacher, we have moments of maybe this is not the right fit.

[00:10:38] But most of the day, there's always like a thousand little things every day that make up for the one or two things every day that make you question some of your choices. - I'm gonna play a short video for you. Set up on so you can hear it. - Okay.

[00:11:01] - Oh, that's Ms. Mills. - We are proud to recognize and celebrate the incredible contributions of Mr. Coward, affectionately known as Mr. C. - Ms. Faye deserves this honor because she is the most helpful and the nicest teacher I've ever had. - My daughter, River, had Shelly as her second grade teacher.

[00:11:20] To put into context the impact Shelly's had my daughter. River's dad was fighting stomach cancer, and she was feeling excluded by peers. Not to mention, she was now also struggling with math concepts, which was impacting her confidence.

[00:11:36] As our dedicated music teacher, Mr. C not only enriches our students' lives through music education, but he also plays a pivotal role in many of our cherished programs. I did not know a lot of English at the time, and when the assignments were hard for me, She'll always take time to help me and explain it to make it easier for me.

[00:11:54] Shelly took time out of her day to ensure that my child had support, confidence, and skills to succeed. Mr. C also coordinates our positive behavior intervention support celebrations, recognizing and rewarding students who demonstrate positive behavior and improvements.

[00:12:11] She is the best teacher you could possibly have. She is a very special person in my heart and she'll always be. Even two years later, my daughter finds her in the hall every day for a hug. And this summer she's talking about getting excited for another one.

[00:12:28] We are deeply grateful for his unwavering efforts to enhance the educational experience of our students. Thank you Miss Sissy for all that you do. Well you know, always humbling to have anybody speak kindly of you.

[00:12:47] What a wonderful kid and it's lovely for me to hear him remember me because that was two years ago. It's nice to know that when we try so hard to make those connections, whether they're small or whether they're big that they are making a difference in a child's life and her child was one of those kiddos and i was able to make a connection with her And I think I got a lot from that connection.

[00:13:17] Well, if he was here, what would you say to him? That I... How are you? Thank you. Congratulations. Congratulations. Thank you so much for what you did.

[00:13:33] Thank you. What are you saying? Hi. Thank you. So let us welcome and honor the exemplary colleagues, teacher Sharon Bay from Springfield Park Elementary, music teacher Jonathan Coward from

Glen Lee Elementary, Shelley Mikowski teacher at Tuckahoe Elementary. I am so proud to present each of our honorees

[00:14:08] a lantern symbolizing the light they shine in our community. We are so fortunate to have teachers and staff members like this in all of our schools. Their impact on students is immeasurable. To see more stories like this and learn more about our Yay of the Day recipients, you should visit our school division website at henricoschools.us. Madam Chair, that completes tonight's Henrico

[00:14:47] highlight. Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. The next item on our agenda is the mission statement. Mr. Young, would you do the honors? Yes. Henrico County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence will actively engage our students in diverse educational social and civic learning experiences that expire and empower them to become contributing citizens thank you mr young we will move forward with our public forum which is the next item on the agenda this is a time when citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division

[00:15:27] Citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board. Speakers will be called to speak in the order in which they signed up and may not relinquish their spot to someone else. We ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and school affiliation, if applicable, and the subject of your remarks before speaking.

[00:15:55] after stating your name please place the number you were given in the cart near the podium speakers must present their remarks to the school board not the audience and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk the use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order to assist you in tracking your time there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen speakers will also receive a notice from me

[00:16:31] when the time has expired the school board is here today to hear from you we will not be responding to speakers concerns or questions during the public forum however a henrico staff member will follow up with speakers at this time with speaker number one please approach the podium Moving on to speaker number two.

[00:17:01] Hello, my name is Lisa Dyer. I am a teacher at Tucker High School. As a product of HCPS, a parent of four students currently in HCPS and a 20-year teacher in HCPS, I'm a believer in public schools and the value they bring to our students.

[00:17:23] But that's not how I feel about the value placed on employees. The HCPS motto for years has been, "The right to achieve, the support to succeed." But I don't feel like I have the support to succeed. Two years ago, I communicated the issue of inequitable compensation for theater teachers to HR, and for two years I was told to be patient that there was a task force working on it.

[00:17:46] I offered to help give information, examples, or data that might be deemed useful. I was never contacted. in the spring of 2024 a group of theater teachers was fortunate to have a meeting with some central office staff at that meeting we discussed an array of issues that directly affect us as theater teachers at the end of that meeting dr farrell stated he thought a follow-up meeting was necessary that meeting never happened i ask you today to rectify the unfair and inequitable stipend i receive as a high school theater director or as worded in my extended responsibilities contract

[00:18:21] Dramatics Head High School. My pay is the same as the assistant basketball, baseball or softball coach. The assistant. Each year I design, direct, choreograph, costume and produce two main

stage shows in addition to curricular performances. One is a musical involving 100 students. The other is a play involving 60. Each show season is eight weeks and demands at least 300 hours of my time.

[00:18:51] I work closely with our school bookkeeper and county legal team to assure contract adherence. I handle tens of thousands of dollars related to purchasing and ticket sales annually. No other classroom teacher or coach has this kind of responsibility.

[00:19:06] When my specialist told me that the county spent the summer recalibrating extended responsibilities only to decide that there would be zero change to the Dramatics Head High School stipend, I was gobsmacked. True there's talk of an additional stipend for VHSL for those participating, but no adjustment to the stipend I've been trying to draw attention to for two years.

[00:19:27] The advice I was given by my specialist to address my disbelief was to do less. This is demoralizing. To say I feel completely disregarded and unappreciated doesn't come close to expressing the anger and the disillusionment that anyone can think that the work I do is akin to that of an assistant coach.

[00:19:45] I've been misled all summer and told that real change was happening. Nope. I've spent the last 20 years of my life cultivating a theater program, the largest in Henrico County, only to be told to do less. I shouldn't have to sabotage my program and shortchange my students because the county can't address the issue of inadequate compensation.

[00:20:07] Please pay theater directors a head coach stipend for each extracurricular production we direct. What's fair that's what's equitable and that is what is right thank you thank you so much speaker

[00:20:22] number three all right moving along to speaker number four speaker number five my name is marlene sherlock and our family lives in the fairfield district i wish i could say we were excited about

[00:21:01] the new school year but we're not the august 1st public announcement of the new student IDs was initially met with optimism the prospect of having a one card does it all for lunches libraries even transportation was well received. Then we dug deeper and discovered, buried on a linked website FAQ, that all students would be required to wear the IDs all day every day. But nowhere else has that requirement been outlined, not in the student code of conduct, nor any board policy or regulation.

[00:21:29] The messaging was late and in some cases wrong. Your chief of staff in an email to me on August 14th clarified that our youngest learners would not be expected to wear them, nor would the IDs be required for activities like recess or sports practice and a follow-up email i just received this afternoon at 4 18 from her during your work session has confused me with the messaging even more miss coy says there will be quote no associated disciplinary consequences unquote so let me understand there'll be no punishment when students do not wear or don't have their ID how does that jive with your press release and the back-to-school communication we received

[00:22:08] about it being an expectation. So once again, I find myself in the position of imploring you to have your stated policy match your practice. Don't say one thing and do something else. There was a trial run this past spring at some schools, but the Chief of Staff has confirmed no formal report on the pilot was compiled.

[00:22:27] Contrast that with the many discussions around weapons detectors that included objectives, findings, feedback, and were rounded out with modifications to formal policy documents. The ID trial, as I understand it, was only for bus transportation and did not involve worn badges. You also didn't issue an

RFP for the purchase of the cards that you claim have a \$5 replacement cost. So for 50,000 cards for every student, some 250,000 or a quarter of a million dollars, you didn't use conventional purchasing protocols?

[00:22:59] As for implementation, the actual lanyards and IDs leave a lot to be desired. There's only one style they are not easily break away and can be grabbed on each side from behind and choke the wearer let me be clear i'm not criticizing the issuance of the ids i just object to the requirement for students to wear them all day and the speed and manner in which the apparent requirement has been conveyed please have your staff provide a public presentation of the trial run clarify the types of id use including data collection access and retention and finally hold

[00:23:34] off on the requirement to wear the IDs until you've done the first two. I think a process affecting over 50,000 students multiple times a day deserves that level of scrutiny and discourse. Thank you. Thank you so much. To the contributors of written commentary and speakers assembled here today, thank you for your participation. Dr. Cashwell. Thank you. The next

[00:24:07] items are consent items and therefore they can be taken in a block colleagues do you have any questions is there a motion i move that the school board accept adopt approve and or award items 8.01 through 8.09 on the consent agenda as presented give mrs shea is there a second second all in favor say aye aye any opposed the eyes have it the items have been approved the last item on the

[00:24:45] The next item on the agenda is unfinished business. Colleagues, is there any unfinished business? Are there any new business?

[00:25:04] Now we're at the last item on the agenda, which is the announcements of the next meeting dates. Our next meeting is a work session and it's scheduled on Thursday, September 13th at 3 p.m. at the New Bridge Learning Center Auditorium.

[00:25:21] The meeting time may be adjusted as needed. This meeting is adjourned.



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