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Henrico County School Board Town Hall, Monday, February 3, 2025

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- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YJt9PhecOM>
- Official meeting portal (Henrico County Public Schools, Diligent Community): <https://henricoschools.community.diligentoneplatform.com/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-25. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:00] - Good evening and welcome to the first school board town hall of 2025. I am Marci Shea, chair of your school board and proud representative of the Tuckahoe District. My board colleagues and I are so appreciative that you're taking time out of your busy weeknight schedule to be with us here this evening as we share updates from across Henrico County Public Schools.

[00:00:23] It's my pleasure to introduce my colleagues, the vice chair and representative of the Three Shop District, Mr. Madison Irving, representing the Brooklyn District, Mrs. Christy Kinsella, from the Fairfield District, Mr. Ryan Young, our representative from the Verina District, Mrs. Alicia Atkins could not be here this evening, but she sends her regrets, as well as our super superintendent, Dr. Amy Cashwell is with us.

[00:00:56] As you know, Hemrico Schools is home to more than 50,000 learners who are served by our dedicated teachers, support staff, administrators. Our students come to us from more than 120 countries and speak 140 languages, making us one of the most diverse school communities in all of Virginia. We strive to ensure that all learners have access to rigorous and meaningful learning experiences that empower them to become responsible, contributing members of our community. Building on our wide array of

[00:01:32] specialty centers and career and technical education programs across the division. This fall we opened our first middle school Center for Innovation at John Roth Middle School, where students can tap into their creativity, participate in hands-on projects, and explore business and STEAM-related careers. This is through a special partnership with the VCU's Da Vinci Center for Innovation and various local businesses and community groups. Students are learning from experienced professionals in high profile fields. This is the

[00:02:08] first of two planned centers for innovation. We look forward to expanding our second model here at Cuiacus and Middle School in just a few years. In addition to innovative learning opportunities, we know that we need the best and brightest teachers and staff to support the academic success of our students. Over the last five years, we've added 76 new teachers to support English language learners, and 56 school counselors.

[00:02:42] Additionally, HCPS is investing \$9.6 million to support Opportunity Schools, which have the greatest number of provisionally licensed staff in the classroom. The funding supports licensure attainment, targeted professional development, and a teacher fellow who, in addition to teaching students, serves as a mentor to new and developing teachers.

[00:03:06] You will see continued growth of the Opportunity Schools initiative, as well as additional staff to meet the increasing needs of our students in the proposed fiscal year 2026 budget. The development of the annual budget plan is a complex and detailed process.

[00:03:21] Each year, the school board and Dr. Cashwell strive to provide not only our students and staff need, but also the resources and compensation they deserve and the quality learning opportunities that our community has come to expect from RICO County Public Schools.

[00:03:36] As responsible stewards of taxpayer money, we start by reviewing division-wide priorities and goals in the context of what can reasonably be expected when the state budget and local allocations are formalized. At this time, I'd invite Dr. Cashwell to the podium to share the details of the budget recommendations as she has presented to the school board for our consideration.

[00:03:59] Thank you, Mr. Irving. So the fiscal 26 recommended financial plan reflects our commitment, as Mr. Irving said, to academic excellence, to safety and wellness, to recruitment and retention of exemplary educators and staff.

[00:04:20] The division leadership has taken a conservative fiscal approach while providing innovative instructional programs, real-world experiences for our students, and wraparound services that truly support the whole child, totaling approximately \$734 million, a 4.2% increase over the current budget the proposed fiscal year 26 spending plan makes a significant investment in instructional resources for our students of all abilities program growth at our campus of Virginia Randolph and the of course

[00:04:58] the expansion of our opportunity schools initiative with the inclusion of Ratcliffe Elementary and Brooklyn Middle School for the next school year the budget also makes permanent a number of essential programs and services that were previously funded through pandemic recovery grants.

[00:05:16] Here are some of the highlights that are in the budget proposal. Funding to establish and begin curriculum development for a new high school specialty center that will be at Henrico High School focused on cyber security, 53 school security officers and three supervisors to support student and staff safety at our schools with a particular focus on our open campus middle and high schools, five school

counselors for the second year of the implementation of the Henrico Cares initiative, which is a partnership with our general government, 15 English as a

[00:05:52] second language instructional staff, 52 positions to support expanded programming at the campus of Virginia Randolph, and 83 positions associated with providing planning time at our elementary school. It makes those permanent initiative that was previously started this school year. The budget also includes expanded eligibility for participation in our career ladder to include classified staff and our leadership positions, new and increased extracurricular stipends for employees, and an offset of increasing

[00:06:29] the group health care premiums through an increase in the employer's share. In other words, employees will see little to no increase in that health care cost for calendar year 2025 and i want to point out that at this part of the proposed budget you will not see employee raises but that is yet hcps employee raises are considered as a part of the henrico county municipal budget development as we're on a unified pay structure as superintendent i continue to work with our school board and our funding partners in the county to ensure well deserved

[00:07:08] compensation increases across all of our Henrico County Public Schools employee groups and certainly look forward to sharing news at that part of the budget development later in the spring and now I think I'm inviting mr. Irving back to the podium for some more details Thank You dr. Cashwell so what is next in the budget process on February 13th the school board will hold a public hearing on the recommended spending plan at 5 p.m. Then on January 27th, the school board is scheduled to approve that budget with any amendments. And on April 17th, after

[00:07:47] the Board of Supervisors adopts the overall budget, including funds for salary increases, the school board will then formally adopt its final budget. As Dr. Cashwell mentioned, the school board is laser-focused on employee compensation. After all, to be the best, you have to hire the best last spring the school board approved and across the board 8.4 4.8% raise that all hcps staff with an additional step increase that brought the raise to 7.2% for teachers licensed instructional staff and bus drivers that means that every employee's salary will have increased by

[00:08:23] a minimum of 13% in two years and stay tuned because we are confident there will be more good news about employee raises in compensation very soon now on Mr. Young. Thank you, Mr. Irvin. Separate from our general operating budget, the school board also approves an annual capital improvement plan. Before we begin roundtable discussions this evening, we'd like to give you a brief update on some of the projects that are in progress.

[00:08:55] Beginning over at the campus of Virginia Randolph, the renovated ACE Center space is complete. Meanwhile, the two-story expansion to the Academy of Virginia Randolph is ongoing. When completed in the spring, the campus will include collaborative learning spaces and the state-of-the-art classrooms. Four projects from the 2022 bond referendum are also in progress.

[00:09:16] In June, we approved plans to replace Jackson Davis and R.C. Logan Elementary schools. The new building, which will increase capacity at the schools, will be constructed on portions of the campuses behind the existing schools. Students are slated to move into the new building in 2026.

[00:09:32] Now to hear more, Ms. Kinsella from the Brooklyn District. Thank you Mr. Young. I have the pleasure of discussing our living building at Wilton Farm. One of the division's most exciting capital

improvement projects is this building. This building, the first living building challenge certified public K-12 building in the world, let me say it again, in the world, was approved by Henrico voters in the 2022 bond referendum. When complete, it will serve students enrolled in the

[00:10:09] Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainability, all levels of HTPF students in various capacities and our larger Henrico community. To achieve living building status, the building must meet specific rigorous sustainability targets.

[00:10:26] You'll have the chance to learn more about that during one of our round table discussions this evening. Now I turn the program back over to Chair Shea. - Thanks, Ms. Kinsella. And of course, we are all excited about the upcoming replacement of Cuyacuson Middle School.

[00:10:41] The new queue, or as I like to call it, the re-queue. The new school will eventually be home to fully accessible future ready learning spaces and the division's second middle school center for innovation. You can learn more about the design plans and construction timelines as part of our, one of our breakout sessions this evening.

[00:11:01] I'm gonna invite Sean Gilliland from the communication team to explain how tonight's round table presentations will work. your tables you have members of dr cashwell's cabinet who are the true experts about what is going on in our division as well as some of our specialists and directors for the individual topics and so you're in a real treat to be able to pick their brains and ask questions and hear from hear from the team thank you mrs shea as she said when you go home tonight

[00:11:39] I don't want you to tell your partners or your spouses what a great time you had tonight, because this is kind of like speed dating, and you're going to have a great time. When we did this in October, folks were so engaged, we could hardly pull them away from the table to move them through the rotation of content topics that we have for you tonight. And when you leave, you're going to think, wow, what a wealth of information I'm leaving about HTPS tonight.

[00:12:04] And our content experts, as Mrs. Shea said, have prepared great presentations for you tonight.



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