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Henrico County School Board Work Session, Thursday, February 13, 2025

Date Thursday, February 13, 2025
Place Henrico County School Board, Virginia
Length 1h 13m (video)

- Official meeting video (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ffg8YCSeJR4>
- 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.

[00:00:01] good afternoon and welcome to the february 13th 2025 work session of the hemrico county school board our first item on the agenda is the pledge of allegiance thank you chair shea members of the board we will have a pledge of allegiance which will be followed by a moment of silence if you would please stand i pledge allegiance to the flag of the united states of america and to the republic for which it stands one nation under god indivisible with liberty

[00:00:36] and justice for all if you would remain standing as you're able for a moment of silence and that concludes our moment of silence you may be seated thank you so much the next item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda colleagues is there a motion i move i move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting moved by mr irving is there a second second

[00:01:12] seconded by miss atkins all those in favor say aye aye any opposed the ayes have it the agenda has been approved now to our superintendent thank you chair shea members of the board before we begin today's presentations i would like to share with our community and those watching today's live stream that february is national school board and school board clerk appreciation month we are fortunate to have the absolute best school board here in henrico we are grateful for your commitment

[00:01:48] careful consideration of key issues in policy and your service to the students families and staff of henrico county public schools yours is ordinarily a thankless job but today we offer you our heartfelt thanks for all you do to strengthen our schools and our community if you will please step down to the front of the dais some of our career and technical education students have created a handmade token of appreciation on behalf of the school division and BJ Crowder as you make your way to the front is going to tell you about the

[00:02:27] gifts and about the students who worked on them if you would line up in front and BJ tell us about the gifts. Thank You Dr. Cashwell, Madam Chair, members of the school board for this year's token of appreciation to the school board honor their commitment to career and technical education in Henrico County students and teachers at the ACE Center at Highland Springs and ACE Center at Hermitage constructed some fun cornhole boards. Carpentry students from the ACE Center at Highland Springs taught by Mr. Burt Childress designed and manufactured these regulation-sized cornhole boards. Students collaborated with the graphic production program students at ACE Center at Hermitage taught by Mr.

[00:03:07] Sheldon Glasner to produce the vinyl Henrico County Public Schools and the CT logos that are featured on these boards. For a personal touch, each board member has received a custom color set of beanbags to use with their boards. The colors chosen are the colors of one of the high schools from their magisterial district. We hope our board members will enjoy this fun token of appreciation for all that you have done and continue to support our career and technical education programs to help ensure our students are enrolled, enlisted, and or employed.

[00:03:42] thank you oh thank you bj and as our board members return to their seats as they make their way to their seats i am going to read the governor's proclamation for school board appreciation month whereas school board members or elect are elected or appointed to represent the interests of students teachers parents and other stakeholders and whereas school board members play a vital role in ensuring that students across the commonwealth have access to high quality, rigorous education, and are best positioned to uphold educational

[00:04:18] excellence in Virginia schools, and whereas school boards are the governing bodies responsible for the oversight, success, transparency, effectiveness, and outcome of school systems across the Commonwealth, and whereas local school board members work for their community's parents, businesses, education professionals and other community members to execute a shared vision of success for students.

[00:04:45] And whereas these decisions affect the present and future lives of children and chart a path to prepare all students to be productive workers in the Virginia economy, informed and engaged citizens in our pluralistic democracy, and responsible and good neighbors in our communities.

[00:05:05] whereas School Board Appreciation Month acknowledges the contributions, dedication, and service of Virginia's local school board members. Now, therefore, I, or rather he, Governor Youngkin, do hereby recognize February 2025 as School Board Appreciation Month in our Commonwealth of Virginia and call this observance to the attention of all our citizens. The proclamation signed by Governor Youngkin on February 1 is posted on the Commonwealth of Virginia website. School board members thank

[00:05:38] you for your incredible service to our community. Round of applause. And as I mentioned earlier February is also school board clerk appreciation month and we are proud to honor and thank Mrs.

[00:05:57] Tiffany Burton clerk of the school board for her support of the board school leadership and our community during, Tiffany, during School Board Clerk Appreciation Month, actually every month, week, and day of the year, we value you and are grateful for your attention to detail and organizational skills. Please accept the flowers at your seat from the school board and from me as a small token of our deep appreciation for you. Thank you for all you do. Would you please rise so we

[00:06:25] give you some applause all right now and moving on to our first item we have a presentation and an update on the progress of the hcps career ladder program for the 2024 2025 academic year i know that as we've had budget conversations over the past years you all continue to support and invest in this tremendous program and wanted to provide you an update of where we've been and and where we're headed.

[00:06:59] Dr. Hughes and Dr. Weston. - Thank you, Dr. Cashwell. Good afternoon Chair Shea, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell. As Dr. Cashwell said, my name is Leslie Hughes, Chief Learning Officer for Henrico County Public Schools, and I'm joined today by Dr. Tracey Weston, Director of Professional Learning and Leadership.

[00:07:17] As you may recall, Dr. Weston and I provided an update on the career ladder in September. - Just pause for one moment. We're having a technical difficulty.

[00:07:41] Okay, okay. We're gonna continue the presentation. I just wanted to make sure it's showing for our live stream, and we also have a version behind us and in board docs, and we'll get those side monitors up shortly.

[00:07:57] We're good on the live stream. Okay, great. - We're ready? - Please continue. - Okay, as you may recall, Dr. Weston and I provided an update on the career ladder in September, and we are pleased to be here this afternoon to share a first look at the expansions introduced earlier this year, along with the continued success of the educator ladder.

[00:08:15] To fully illustrate the impact of this work, we will conclude this brief overview with a video featuring the perspectives of career ladder participants and HCPSU team members who lead adult learning each week. This highlight will showcase their experiences and the influential role the career ladder plays in professional growth.

[00:08:37] As we begin, it's always important to highlight that the career ladder aligns directly with the division's strategic plan, Destination 2025, and based on participant feedback, continues to positively impact the strategic goal of recruiting, retaining, and rewarding high quality employees.

[00:08:57] - In the summer of 2022, Henrico launched the inaugural career ladder, the educator ladder, offering the first micro-credential classes. The first two specializations soon followed in January, 2023. And staying on track with the plan timeline, the first expansion introduced two additional career ladders, the classified employee ladder in the fall of 2024, and the school leader ladder in January 2025.

[00:09:23] Before diving into updates on the educator and the leader ladders, we're excited to share a first glance at the classified ladder. In just four months, 567 unique participants have completed at least one professional learning course with many engaging in multiple sessions.

[00:09:42] Departments across the district have joined together to provide impactful and relevant learning opportunities for our classified team. Up to 33 sessions are available each semester, and to date,

more than 5,035 hours of professional learning have been completed.

[00:09:59] Courses consistently fill each month upon release, and new offerings are continually added to ensure continued growth, interest, and development. Expanding on these learning opportunities, sessions have covered a wide range of topics designed to support and empower our classified team.

[00:10:18] These include safety protocols, strategies for creating world-class communication, de-escalation techniques, technology efficiency, trauma-informed practices, and knowing yourself to better interact with others through the Myers-Briggs personality assessments.

[00:10:34] Additionally, book studies such as Eat That Frog have provided practical strategies for improving productivity and time management. This session encourages participants to tackle their most challenging tasks first. Based on the idea that if you start each day by eating a live frog, your most difficult or important task, everything else will feel easier.

[00:10:58] What we've heard? As we reflect on the initial launch of our classified ladder, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. When participants were asked how valuable was this session to you professionally, the average rating for all sessions combined was an impressive 4.89 out of five.

[00:11:18] Beyond the numbers, the comments tell a richer story. Participants shared sentiments like, I stepped out of my comfort zone today. I felt like I could take on the world. I now know where I need to grow and where I excel. This level of engagement and reflection highlights the impact of the classified ladder is already having.

[00:11:38] It's clear that participants are not only finding value in the experience, but also gaining confidence and clarity in their professional growth. This makes a strong start for the program's rollout, and we look forward to sharing additional insights, including participant feedback in future meetings.

[00:11:57] Continuing with the successful momentum of the classified ladder, let's shift to the educator and leader ladders, specifically the ongoing success of the micro-credential and specialization programs. As a reminder, micro-credentials are 20 to 30 hour competency-based courses and experiences focused on specific topics, providing personalized and on-demand professional learning.

[00:12:26] Specializations are rigorous, 32-week, 99-plus-hour, cohort-based programs designed and taught by Henrico staff. The program mirrors the rigor of a graduate course while being tailored to HCS practices. Currently, there are five specializations, four designed specifically for the Educator Ladder and one for the newly launched Leader Ladder.

[00:12:49] Like the broader microcredential program, specializations continue to be remarkably successful. January 2025 marked the launch of our third specialization cohort and the first leader ladder cohort.

[00:13:04] Participation has grown significantly from 48 in year one to 176 in year three. To date, 126 staff members have completed at least one specialization, collectively earning over 13,000 hours of professional learning, and each earning a 4.8 percent salary advancement.

[00:13:25] Together, specializations and micro-credentials have contributed to more than 60,000 hours of voluntary professional learning. This collective effort benefits not only participants and facilitators, but also extends beyond the courses. Its impact is evident in team meetings, professional networks, and most

importantly in our classrooms, where students experience the benefits every day. Beyond completing courses, the career ladder creates pathways for educators to grow as

[00:14:00] leaders, reinforcing our belief that we learn best from one another. One such opportunity is serving as adjunct faculty for ACPSU. Upon successfully completing the specialization, participants may apply to join the adjunct faculty team and teach a specialization course, providing an additional avenue for professional growth and compensation. Currently, 50 percent of adjunct faculty members are specialization graduates, and we remain committed to strengthening this leadership

[00:14:31] pipeline by prioritizing program graduates for available positions. Now, let's experience the career ladder in action by stepping into a Tuesday evening at HCPSU also known as Tucker High School where specialization participants are actively engaged in learning and collaboration this year's cohort three and it's been incredible already we've got over 170 educators walking into Tucker and so we've added in a new specialization in adult learning that focuses on coaching mentoring

[00:15:08] professional learning working with teachers and then we have our first ever specialization on the career ladder, and it's focusing on how can principals, assistant principals, really support instruction in their building from where they are. Think about fostering a culture of consistent practice of warm demandingness.

[00:15:26] One thing that I've always loved about Henrico, and especially when I have colleagues in other divisions, is the professional learning opportunities that Henrico provides. It's great that we go to conferences, but to be in a room with 24 other principals and associate principals is just very refreshing.

[00:15:42] One of the things about learning and the adult learning for me is tangible takeaways. I like to be able to go to class on Tuesday, learn something that I can fully implement on Wednesday morning when I go to work. And that's how it's kind of, it's not a class, it's more on-the-job training.

[00:15:58] The program focuses on us taking the Henrico Learner profile, which is the foundation of what we're doing, and using HCPSU and all of those resources to strengthen the academics in our schools. So going to an outside program would be great, but we won't get it the Henrico way, and show us just how important it is in learning new strategies of how to implement the HLP to be academically successful.

[00:16:21] This is a good time as we're talking about all these different populations to start thinking about... I've been teaching 34 years and I got more out of this class than any class that I've ever taken in college or at a graduate level because it was relevant to what I'm doing in my classroom.

[00:16:42] When we would meet in the cohort, and it was just about getting better as a teacher. And that was something that made me look forward to Tuesday, even though it meant working three hours extra or whatever. It was about talking to other people and getting better.

[00:16:59] It's not necessarily that I learned some mind altering thing that I didn't know before, but I was given the opportunity through the specializations to look at my practice and implement things that I either hadn't tried before or use new tools that maybe I'd heard of them but I hadn't seen and then reflect on them and figure out how to make them better for myself.

[00:17:28] really more of an opportunity to apply and reflect. I'm always a lifelong learner, and that's one thing I really appreciate about this cohort and about Henrico County is not only do they emphasize the

Henrico learner profile for kids to be lifelong learners, but this program really allows for adults to also become lifelong learners.

[00:17:51] My job role now is to take the information that I have, more specifically with technology integration but also like professional learning take the knowledge that I have and pass it on to the building so it's more than just like building my own capacity it's taking the capacity I have and making sure that others have it if I'm in this program I feel like I can continue to better myself and there is a reward there is incentive for bettering yourself yes who doesn't love the money right yes there's a pay increase that's associated with it but also you are perfecting your craft and you're working with so many like-minded individuals

[00:18:21] I would still do it even if I wasn't in a position to like share out information, do professional learning, but it's an added bonus for me to be able to take the knowledge that I'm gaining and make people aware of these opportunities, make people aware of the opportunities that our district offers and the information that you can receive.

[00:18:40] We know that we have parameters, but what are we going to do to kind of give them a little bit of a say in the decision making? Also, kids can have sensory processing difficulties, but it talks about, like, increased somatic complaint.

[00:18:57] So, I mean, the anxiety, fear, worry, and stress, those are all kind of, like... I was a part of the original diverse learners cohort, so the OGs. It was very, very inspiring. I learned a lot, and I was able to implement things that I learned in class, like, immediately the next day with my children.

[00:19:17] In doing that, I knew that I wanted to be a part of it going forward. The Trauma-Informed Educator Cohort actually started first. Our first cohort was last year, and we started with 20 participants, and it was mostly at the time school-based mental health.

[00:19:32] But this year, we have mostly teachers in our cohort, so it is a specialization that is for anyone that's in the classroom. It's relevant. It's relevant to your job as a teacher, as a coach, whatever you may be, it's 100% relevant.

[00:19:47] We know that we have such great educators here at Henrico, but this takes it deeper, and it gives us that sense of community to move forward with this work together collectively. I don't think there's a day that goes by that I don't incorporate something that I learned from my cohort into my classrooms.

[00:20:08] It's rewarding teachers to get better, and it's incentivizing teachers that are highly qualified or want to be highly qualified to stay within the county and i think it's an excellent thing so we are helping students with that second language this nothing like this existed in tennessee in fact there are so many people here who are invested at making our educators better i've i've personally never seen that before in any other district i've been in i think with graduate classes you do a lot of regurgitation of you know theories and that kind of thing and

[00:20:43] that's not what this is about this is about doing and acting on it and that's why it works no matter whether you're a new teacher whether you're a veteran teacher you will go on this program you will leave with something that's going to help you be a more engaging and beneficial and creative teacher as we conclude this afternoon's presentation we want to thank you the board for your continued support of meaningful personalized professional learning and your commitment to funding the career ladders as

reflected in the 2025-2026 recommended budget sustaining and expanding the career ladder requires continuous investment through the operating

[00:21:20] budget your advocacy and support make these programs and future growth possible by investing in ongoing professional learning we are not only retaining top talent but we're fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation that strengthens in richmond county public schools again thank you to the board and at this time we'll be happy to take your questions thank you so much i'll start to my left with miss atkins well this certainly shows that when we focus on possibilities we open the door to opportunities i'm really excited that trauma

[00:21:58] informed learning has expanded beyond our school-based mental health professionals i think that is going to transform how practice looks in our in our buildings so thank you for that i'm very proud of your work and the team's work and the collaborative efforts that are taking place i believe the last time might have been september october time frame when we received an update and it might have been mr young that asked if this had been expanded to part-time employees. Is there any update on that? At this time, we have not expanded to part-time. We're

[00:22:37] still in that pilot for our classified staff being in only four months, but we're in continuous conversation of our next steps with the career ladder. Wonderful. Thank you for that. I think all board members are interested in staying abreast as that conversation continues. I don't have anything, well, actually something else just popped into in my thoughts. As school-based counselors continue professional learning, are there any specific specializations that will be

[00:23:10] added in discussion? So we are in continuous discussion of which new specializations will occur. And right now with the adult learning and the trauma-informed, both would be applicable to our school counselors and then we will continue to work with miss parker to see what we had what beyond could potentially be added to the ladder wonderful thank you so much chair shea thank you so much mr young uh i got one question but thank you for the presentation um and thank you um mr atkins for asking about the part-time employees is there um is there any group that's not covered

[00:23:49] under the classified that may be entering in in the future it's a great question and yes we are looking at specifically our facilities team with the first entry being our custodians and those on like scales and then the first expansion of the classified ladder only included a portion of our office professionals so we're looking in that next iteration to also include more of our office professionals okay awesome and Miss Ackers also talked touched on the trauma-informed educator so I think that's amazing that more of our teachers getting involved now so thank you for the presentation thank you so much mr.

[00:24:28] Irving thank you for so much for this for this presentation as a teacher myself I think this is a wonderful opportunity and I I'm so glad to see so many people taking advantage of it I I did have one question from an employee within the county as it relates to the micro credentials and they they said that they themselves have done three of these courses and received three micro credentials, so they loved the program, but they were curious if we were able to compensate folks for a, so say they worked a previous job and they had a master's degree, and we always compensate

[00:25:04] folks who have a master's degree coming into the profession, but they got another master's degree in order to do the job that they want to do now to become a librarian within the county and didn't receive compensation for that. I'm curious if we could look at how that relates to micro-credentials because getting a whole master's degree is the equivalent of multiple of these courses and if not you know

compensation for two master's degrees could it at least be equal to the work that's been done in some of these courses in terms of you know future compensation please feel free to

[00:25:40] invite any teacher to reach out to me your members are special learning team we're happy to help but currently a second master's degree or endorsement does count as a micro-credential. Oh, it does? It's an external micro-credential, yes. Okay. And there is on HCPSU that any staff member can submit coursework done, and we will review it to see if it meets the guidelines and criteria of a micro-credential from the external.

[00:26:04] All right. Thank you. That's all I have. Thank you all so much. This is really exciting. I know when I first came on the board, we were almost ready to launch, and then COVID, And then there was some additional editing and iteration because we really took time, especially Dr. Baker, really took time to look at what are our staff asking for, right?

[00:26:31] And really hone that into meaningful PD or PL for our staff. I think we have seen the abundance of return on that in both satisfaction from our employees that have engaged in the latter, but then also ultimately in the classroom for our students.

[00:26:56] I really loved the video and seeing a lot of our dynamic, outstanding educators from my district, some of my children's teachers in there. It warms my heart knowing how passionate they are in the classroom for them to have the opportunity to engage with other educators that are just as passionate and have those discussions and that growing. And I know that as one of the gentlemen on the video, how fulfilling that was personally. And yes, the compensation, as he said, yes, the compensation is always, you know, an extra bonus, but it was really about that personal fulfillment and offering that to our staff

[00:27:31] to continue to grow and how that ties into satisfaction of the job. I think y'all have done a really incredible job. How do we decide what topics to offer as micro-credentials? So on HTPSU, staff have an opportunity to make suggestions, but we also work as a district team and constant conversation, looking at the work that we're currently doing, and if there are micro-credentials and specializations that will support that work across the division.

[00:27:59] Awesome. Thank you. And I really loved as well, like how Mr. Jackson said he can learn something on Tuesday and implement it on Wednesday. And I think that's really important when we talk about meaningful PL is being able to really connect to what they're doing in the classroom or the office or, you know, whatever it may apply now every day. So this kind of dovetails into what Mr. Young asked, what full-time groups are currently not included?

[00:28:31] Because we've expanded a lot this year with the leader ladder and some of our classified employees you shared with some other classified employees are there any other large swaths or large groups of employees that are missing from this so we will tackle this one together there are still members of our classified team that we will need to bring on board such as our SSOs we do but I think it's also important when we look at the career ladder it really was for those harder staff positions so that's where our initial and first focus will be and continues to

[00:29:06] be and then we work with our division leadership team and our directors to determine Dr. Caswell I saw your finger I didn't want to cut off your train of thought I just wanted to add a thought after yours please but no go ahead yeah I just wanted to note absolutely so as we bring folks onto the ladder which of course it has those additional opportunities to grow and learn and eventually move up the ladder

for compensation. I do want to be clear that all employee groups, including SSOs, for example, do engage in professional learning and training relevant to their job. That is an important part of our practice always, but it's been wonderful to

[00:29:44] translate that into something even more, which is this idea of recruiting and retaining people over the life of their career who want to grow in the position they're in and be able to move along the ladder. And so we've really expanded faster than I thought we'd be able to. And your investment as a board has been tremendous. And I know we've done a lot of updates. We did one not too long ago on the career ladder, but it continues to expand so rapidly and is so well received by employees. We wanted you to hear their voices directly and see the impact of the work and the

[00:30:19] vision and the expertise that the entire PLL team has brought to this. Dr. Weston and her team is incredible, and they are responsible for the success stories that you're hearing. The investment plus the expertise that's gone into this, and I feel that we will see this expand to all of our employee groups in pretty short order in the coming years, and it's a difference maker. We talk about world-class opportunities for students in Henrico, and we have that for educators. And it's really something that sets us apart. Well, thank you so much. And I just, I love that we can

[00:30:56] continue. There are some PL opportunities that have to happen that may not be employees' kind of first choice of topic, but as we move forward as a division, they're really important. But I love that opportunities like this, we can give them voice and choice as to what really resonates with and they think will improve their craft.

[00:31:15] So thank you for all of your dedication and work, Dr. Weston and Dr. Hughes, on this. Anything else, colleagues? Thank you so much. - And thank you again to the team for that presentation. And we have another exciting update we've shared with you previously, and of course have been grateful for the board's support in the implementation of the Henrico CARES initiative.

[00:31:40] You heard a little bit in our budget presentation about year two of the CARES initiative and what that would bring as far as supports for our staff, students, and community. And so Dr. Hughes and Mrs. Parker are going to share a presentation on Henrico Cares.

[00:31:56] - Okay, once again, good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the board, and Dr. Cashwell. Leslie Hughes, Chief Learning Officer, and as Dr. Cashwell said, Liz Parker, Director of Student Support and Wellness. Together today, we will present a one-year overview on the Henrico Cares implementation to date.

[00:32:14] As you'll recall, Henrico Cares is a joint partnership between Henrico County Public Schools and Henrico County Government that is strategically aimed at serving HCPS students and families and includes core elements driving the evolution of youth mental health care services and support in Henrico County.

[00:32:35] Henrico Cares is an action plan implemented in phases and fully funded after five years with an estimated total investment of \$17.8 million that works to ensure HCPS young people and their families can easily access and navigate a full array of coordinated and integrated mental health care services at various levels of intensity across multiple county agencies, the school system, private and community treatment providers to meet their needs as they shift over

[00:33:07] time henrico care directly aligns with hcps destination 2025 specifically strategic goal 2 henrico county public schools will foster an inclusive safe and supportive climate for all stakeholders and shows what happens when innovation meets dedication i will now turn the remainder of the presentation over to liz parker who will share initial outcomes of these specific initiatives as as they work together to address the full array of youth mental health needs in Henrico County.

[00:33:40] - Thank you, Dr. Hughes. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board and Dr. Cashwell. What started as a charge to bring forward recommendations on how to build Henrico's capacity to meet the growing mental health needs of its young people evolved into a collaborative and transformational model that really sets a new standard for addressing youth mental health.

[00:34:02] Henrico Cares leverages strategic partnerships to bring together all strategies, recommendations, and best practices that were identified through an extensive review of analysis of data and research into one single comprehensive action plan, all aligned around these three cornerstones of youth mental health care that you see here, access, coordination, and navigation.

[00:34:28] As you will recall, the goals of Henrico Cares are threefold. First, it aims to build a comprehensive school mental health system, ensuring every HCPS student has access to a full continuum of mental health care services and supports when and where they need them, while enhancing information sharing and service coordination between schools, families, medical and mental health care providers, and community agencies.

[00:34:57] and at the same time, simplifying the navigation of an often complex and intimidating mental health care system for students and their families, as well as for schools and for providers. That term, comprehensive school mental health system, really just referenced in these goals, really just speaks to a systematic approach for identifying, providing, and monitoring evidence-based interventions and services.

[00:35:25] So here, interventions and programs are delivered within a multi-tiered system of supports. And this allows mental health care services and supports to increase or decrease in the level of intensity to match students' emotional and mental health needs as they shift over time.

[00:35:43] On this slide, you see how school-based mental health providers, our school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists, are integral to the provision of school mental health interventions and services across tiers and as you are aware there are times when student mental health needs require a higher level of intervention than the school is either able to provide or then is appropriate to take place within kind of that learning context so when this occurs our counselors leverage their connections and partnerships under henrico cares to facilitate

[00:36:21] warm handoffs with private public and community providers to help address the full spectrum of youth mental health needs once services are established counselors engage in continued coordination between the family additional school staff and private or community providers to improve student mental health outcomes as you can see school-based mental health providers delivering tiered interventions with fidelity and then accomplishing warm handoff and coordination tasks are imperative to the functioning of a comprehensive school mental health system.

[00:36:58] Fortunately, Henrico Cares provides for the addition of five new school-based mental health positions annually. For the current school year, those positions turned into Tiered Intervention School

Counselor positions. That's what was established. Each Tiered Intervention School Counselor, or TISC for short, serves directly to high schools and utilizes trauma-informed approaches to provide evidence-based programs and interventions specifically addressing youth substance use, violence, and mental health. TISCs also work to proactively address many of the

[00:37:36] underlying factors known to increase youth risk behavior. More specifically, TISCs collaboratively team with HCPS's coordinator of substance use prevention and intervention, existing school-based mental health providers and other content areas to enhance service delivery.

[00:37:57] In fact, due to successful teaming with health and PE, over 16,000 HCPS students in grades 6 through 10 have received life skills training, or LST. This is an evidence-based curriculum shown to prevent youth substance use, violence, and other health risk behaviors.

[00:38:16] And approximately 2,700 students in grades 9 through 10 have successfully completed catch by Breath, an evidence-based youth vaping prevention program to date. Additionally, TISC's have provided 60 students displaying the early stages of substance misuse with the evidence-based program Teen Intervene. Finally, along with Henrico's share office and other community partners, TISC's support their school's implementation of Hidden in Plain Sight, an interactive event that replicates a young person's bedroom for parents and guardians to

[00:38:53] search as a way to educate on how easily items can be hidden, possible signs of substance use, and how to engage in proactive discussions with their child. Current data shows a 90% increase in hidden in plain sight event participation this school year as compared to the same time last school year. Looking ahead, the superintendent's financial plan for the 25-26 school year includes five additional counseling positions allowing for more timely and targeted support and further reducing barriers for students including our earliest learners to access high quality social

[00:39:32] emotional and mental health care within the school environment in addition to the staffing and evidence-based programming we just discussed two new services were launched for hcps students and their families under henrico cares both of which are available regardless of insurance status at no cost. The first was CareSolace, which was our care coordination service in which multilingual care coordinators work 24 hours a day, 365 days a week, quickly researching and connecting students, families, and staff members to mental health care and substance use treatment providers,

[00:40:11] securing appointments on their behalf, and even providing follow-up to make sure the appointment was a success. The next service was Hazel Health, a national teletherapy service in which fully vetted licensed therapists, with parent-guardian permission, are providing students in grades 9 through 12 with weekly virtual therapy sessions from the comfort of their own home.

[00:40:33] Both of these services were formally launched just a little over five months ago. However, in this short period of time, the impact has been profound. First, due to the implementation of Care Solace, 279 individuals connected with HCPS, that include staff, students, and families with whom utilize Care Solis' services were confirmed to have already participated in successful appointments with a mental health provider with an average wait time of just two to three weeks. This equates to a 45% rate of appointments

[00:41:11] into care, which is significantly higher than the national average of 18. Approximately 37 of those being served identify as children, 31% as adolescents, and 31% as adults. And as you can see, the top

five reasons reported for seeking support include anxiety, depression, trauma, ADHD, and disruptive behavior.

[00:41:35] Relatedly, a total of 494 searches have been completed to date on the accompanying Care Match website. That's specifically curated for HCPS and provides a self-guided tool for individuals that want to anonymously collect or connect with a mental health care provider on their own.

[00:41:59] The implementation of Hazel Health has resulted in similar gains. In fact, at the time this presentation was published, 54 individual students in grades 9 through 12 were currently participating or had participated in a total of 138 weekly virtual therapy sessions with a licensed mental health provider and an additional 52 individual students were already scheduled for their first teletherapy appointment and just in that short period of time between then and now these numbers have increased from 54 to 56 students participating in weekly virtual sessions and from 52 to 68

[00:42:39] students scheduled for their first teletherapy appointment. Furthermore, Hazel Health provides consistent and ongoing outreach to all referrals received and has been able to successfully engage was 73% of those referred. Of those, 77% of parents and guardians opted in and consented to their child receiving services. And of those opting in, 80% of students were successfully scheduled for their first initial teletherapy appointment. Here we see the top five reasons reported for seeking teletherapy, including anxiety, sadness, feeling sad, anxious, and

[00:43:15] withdrawn, family concerns, and grief and loss. Just as important, Henrico Cares provides hcps with an opportunity to continue building integrated mental health care services this year hcps partnered with henrico area mental health to co-locate an additional mental health team including a licensed mental health provider a case manager and a clinical supervisor on the campus of fairfield middle school services provided include individual group

[00:43:49] and or family therapy case management and family support as a result henrico area mental health teams now serve on two hcps school campuses including the academy at virginia randolph with plans to continue co-locating one new team annually additionally under henrico cares a number of joint trainings were provided throughout the summer and fall that involved staff from hcps county agencies and community leaders. This resulted in 23 new nationally certified youth

[00:44:25] mental health first aid instructors, 11 new adverse childhood experience or ACE interface trainers, and 14 new nationally certified teen mental health first aid instructors, which significantly increases the capacity for mental health literacy building and stigma reduction efforts throughout the school division and the county. Young people often turn to a trusted individual before they turn to a mental health professional. And when important people in a young person's life know how to respond, they can significantly expand the safety net for those

[00:45:00] in need. Furthermore, Henrico Cares paved the path for HCPS to significantly expand membership in each of its 11 Active Minds student-led mental health clubs, initially made possible by the Henrico Education Foundation. Now with over 386 active high school student members and an additional 58 high school students holding new leadership positions within their chapter, these powerhouse student groups are working hard to serve the needs in their communities and create cultures that are

[00:45:36] more supportive of mental health through policy change, promotion of services, awareness and community building events, social connections, and more. Finally, under Henrico Cares, HCPS was

able to develop a model that builds existing staff capacity for meeting more intensive student mental health needs while strengthening school division staffing efforts for school-based mental health providers and expanding the pipeline of highly qualified licensed mental health providers in our schools and communities.

[00:46:07] To do this, HCPS partners with Henrico Area Mental Health and a local private mental health care agency to provide 12 qualifying HCPS school counselors and school social workers who have served in their roles for at least three years with clinical supervision at no cost to them as they pursue licensure by the Virginia Department of Health Professions as either licensed clinical social workers or licensed professional counselors while they continue to serve in their existing school-based mental health roles.

[00:46:41] This pursuits typically a three and a three and a half year journey and as an additional benefit for those professionals continuing to serve HCPS after they receive their licensure. Both the LPC and the LCSW licensure were added to the HCPS career ladder as being eligible for a salary advancement.

[00:47:02] In sum, these initial results speak volumes about the transformative impact Henrico Cares has and will continue to have on Henrico's young people and their families. at this time ms parker and i are happy to answer any questions thank you so much i'll start to my right this time with mr irving thank you for the presentation uh henrico cares has been one of my i think favorite things that we do i just think it's remarkably important uh service that we provide not only for our students but our staff and families as well um so i'm i'm looking at

[00:47:38] some of this and i love that um the information sharing and coordination between primary care providers and the mental health providers that's I think crucial because I think that's something that gets lost in the platform like it's very easy to see that you get these services but then the logistics of actually doing it and are far more challenging so I appreciate that and simplifying the navigation process especially for young people I think is is vital because that can be always be a barrier to entry on these things is well it's nice that I want this but I don't

[00:48:10] even know how to do it. So I truly appreciate that. So you were saying that our wait time is for students who or staff who first say I want to do this to getting their first appointment is how long again? We have been averaging two to three weeks of wait time from when they access and make contact with carouselists to when they have their initial intake appointment, which is significantly less wait time than we have ever been able to see on our own.

[00:48:39] yeah no that's tremendous is there any way to like logistically shorten that further i don't know if it is possible but i'm just curious like if that's even a thing that can be done we can certainly look into that um typically the average wait time can extend to six months after that initial call so we were thrilled with two weeks but i would be just as thrilled with less time as well no no and if it's one of those things where that's probably the the upper bound of what's possible then that's tremendous um so i was seeing on here 279 appointments into care what defines an appointment

[00:49:17] is that a session like how are we how are we measuring that so carouselis actually follows up with every single individual in which they schedule an appointment for and when they do that they're confirming that the individual attended the sessions and that it was a positive experience and that they've rescheduled another session as well so they want to make sure that they attended it was successful and if it wasn't successful they can troubleshoot and help support the next step okay so when i'm looking at 279 appointments i'm thinking naturally are we do we feel that

[00:49:51] this is being underutilized i think that well that could be not just maybe people aren't as aware of how accessible it is and i'm just curious what the challenges are because we have so many people within our division and that extend to families and staff i'm just curious if it's something that we maybe need to do better to get out there to make folks aware yes well we continue to publicize promote in multiple languages all over the place and every outlet that we have that this is

[00:50:24] available and you know we still find that folks aren't aware sometimes but we we do everything we can just through traditional communication outlets and and everything we can we want folks to know this is available and we want folks to utilize the service.

[00:50:39] - In addition, I'll just share that we do have families and students who access mental health care in another manner besides what we are able to provide and so this is strictly our data that we have since the beginning of the year but we do know families have other avenues that they are utilizing and we don't have that data specifically but I think together it would indicate many more students and families in our division who are utilizing mental health services. And that number does not reflect any families who connected as a result of using the anonymous site lookup and connection there. Okay. Yeah. Cause I, unfortunately there still is a,

[00:51:17] uh, a societal stigma around mental health related issues. And I think while it, that is falling away, it's still there. And, and I mean, I, I want whoever wants to use this to be able to use it. So it's it's more so hoping that you know folks feel that they can uh because i see 54 students participating in baiting on here have accounted for essentially half of the sessions so i do think that it's great that we're helping those who seem to need it the most but i just um you know want folks to know that this is available and out there and it's a tremendous thing that we're

[00:51:53] doing um my last well i have two more questions um and i don't know if if you'll even know the the answer to this. Does Medicaid funding support any of these providers? Medicaid funding, yeah, support any of these providers that we're using? So that's complete, yes, but that's one of the questions they ask when someone calls into Care Solace. So Hazel Health is completely at no cost.

[00:52:18] They don't need insurance. They don't bill insurance. But for Care Solace, that's one of their initial intake questions. And that way they're only providing providers to an individual that is matching the individual's health care status and insurance. But I will say that we do have a number of families that have had successful appointments with no insurance or who are underinsured as well.

[00:52:40] Okay. Well, that's tremendous. And what do you need from us to expand and build existing staff capacity? I just am so appreciative of the board's support for HenricoCare so far and just continued support and efforts.

[00:52:55] mean this has been really wonderful and we are seeing significant impact well we thank you for all of your work thanks so much mr. young thank you for the presentation I think investing in mental health is probably some of the most important work we'll do as a school board to mr. Irvin's point is there any thing that we're doing to remove that stigma of therapy mental health are we promoting it in any sort of way that that's our students or faculty know that okay to seek help or it's okay to have therapy is there any sort of are we really promoting it to a

[00:53:35] point where we are okay a lot of that work comes through our active minds clubs which have been tremendous because that's part of that role is it's peer-to-peer right it's students talking to other

students and really raising that awareness and reducing that stigma from a peer um i think that a lot of our trainings are teen mental health first aid especially and our youth mental health first aid efforts really do target that as well. We've been partnering with faith-based organizations and community organizations to provide those trainings because that's that's really part of the goal is stigma reduction and connection. Yeah and let me ask you this is there

[00:54:14] any sort of way I know students that need mental health care and need counseling if a let's say a faculty member recognize a student needing it is there any way to put it in their path where we know that they're getting the help they need as opposed to just man maybe giving them a hazel health brochure or something like that so we can definitely make a referral so any school counselor or school-based mental health provider can actually physically refer that student to the service and then we ask that they connect with the family um because that just increases the likelihood that the family will then take part once they're contacted by hazel so there are definitely

[00:54:53] efforts like that that are occurring okay okay and um last question the five new counselors that we're putting in place where are they going to be located at i know the first five were at different high schools or at least we're sharing high schools where are the next five going so we are we want to make really good data-informed decisions because we want to make sure that we are placing folks where there's the greatest need that matches their skill set so we continue to analyze all of our data points that will help us come to that determination so we want to look at quarter one quarter two quarter three and make sure that our placement is really

[00:55:29] strategic okay awesome well thank you for the um the work that you guys are doing i really appreciate it thank you thank you thank you so much i'm gonna go to miss atkins and i know she's excited yeah i'm marinating because we've come a long way from nothing so any number that's put up here is progress i also want to say specifically to communities that are watching or if this is someone that's watching after this broadcast that the well-being of our students staff

[00:56:04] and school communities is a is the heart of part of what we do when students feel supported in their mental health. They thrive academically, and they develop a strong sense of self-worth. Who they look at in the mirror is important. So this action plan, which is the verbiage we use, you can say initiative, you'll hear many other words, but it's a powerful model for addressing mental health. And I also want to say to both of you and your team, well said, that this is what happens when dedication

[00:56:40] meets innovation. I would encourage you to use that as a tagline actually on the marketing materials. It sounds silly, but catchy taglines for youth work. So that's just something for you to consider as you're trying to make this welcoming for younger folks. Grabbing them with a catchy tagline on social media works. Hashtag whatever you choose. Also a huge shout out to all mental health professionals who help students and families navigate their emotions

[00:57:18] you're recognizing patterns and you're learning how to process them and helping others process them so thank you also thank you to hef uh for active minds huge shout out um for our partners and finding funding so that we can accomplish things like this and it will continue to evolve this is a beginning step this is actually a baby step and as the baby continues to grow it will evolve and so again i'm very excited about this process about the collaborative efforts that it

[00:57:53] has taken internally externally as well with individuals from all seasons involved in this project i do have a few questions for you so i think i heard the acronym boy we love those tsk Yes, the Tiered

Intervention School Counselor.

[00:58:12] Okay, I will also use TISC as well. So are we actively seeking candidates with specific specialties? The one that has come to mind was dialectical behavioral therapy. That's specifically around the top three that I saw on your chart.

[00:58:31] So we are? Correct, yes, and we actually train. We actually have held a number of trainings for it. dbt yep absolutely another one so dbt in schools is an evidence-based program that we utilize first of all counseling groups and individual counseling here in hcps and so our tasks as well as all of our school counselors and school-based mental health providers actually do provide that intervention dbt in our schools yes so i'm excited to hear about the dbt skills what's interesting and something for you to consider is for someone that may not have the complete specialization,

[00:59:08] there are pieces of that that I think would be helpful for administrative staff and leadership team. So when we're thinking about those particular skills right now with DBT, of course, with our counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, they have the full specializations often or certifications. But take a look at some of the skills within that, some of the trainings within that and share them with Dr. Cashwell's leadership team and your administrative teams I think they may find it useful I heard in the past presentation it's nice to learn something on Tuesday and

[00:59:45] implement it on Wednesday some of the trainings within DBT may allow individuals to do just that So I just wanted to give you that at top of mind. The other question that I had is, so usage data.

[01:00:05] And so I think each of us will probably ask this in our own unique way, but I'm specifically wanting to understand trends. So we have the numbers in front of us in your presentation, but the question is, out of context or not having history you may not understand the impact i think if we understood the trends that flow along with the data that you presented to us today as as leaders we may be able to offer additional guidance so my ask is for the data that you provided please share with myself

[01:00:44] and colleagues the trends that you see that led to the numbers that you presented us i'm i'm pretty aware I believe of what the trends are but I think it's always wise to memorialize it and then you share it and then the conversations could be more around funding or of the five that we are hiring and we understand the trends how does that equate to service I'm a service provider so that's where these questions are coming from and then the last thing is I just want to say to

[01:01:14] to everyone, it's okay to ask for help. I have had to ask for mental health help. And so to remove the stigma, if you have a counselor, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, it's okay to talk about it. It's a great way to open the door for someone else to say, I need help too. So I wanted to use this platform just to say that in any platform that I have, in order to reduce this stigma, we have to say it's okay to ask for help. So I want to thank the both of you for what you do

[01:01:53] and your teams for what you do. This is hard and hard work, and when you're trying to infuse this and make it, I'm going to use the word, attractive to children, it's not. It's never really easy to talk about pain. And so many of our children have experienced grief, whether it was from internally within our schools or externally so reaching one actually reaches many and so in this presentation that's the type of stuff that I'd love to see in here

[01:02:29] how does reaching one reach many include that in your presentations not here but wherever you share them because that is how we increase usage of some of the wonderful resources that we have so

I appreciate you and thank you so much Ms. Shea. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Atkins. This is really tremendous work. I remember when we did our town hall at the Oak and I first heard Ms. Parker talk about the utilization of this and really got to hear kind of the nuts and bolts, particularly around carousels. I was just

[01:03:04] absolutely floored. It is so hard to get an appointment for mental health, especially youth mental health, you know, these six-month waiting periods, it's also really hard to just navigate and figure out who do I even call. And so the fact that Care Solace will ask you questions, figure out where you should go, make the first appointment for you, and for you to say there's a two- to three-week waiting period, I mean, it's longer than that to get my dog bathed, right?

[01:03:36] you know wait period I mean that's that's absolutely incredible and that's life-changing um and then the follow-up to make sure they went and it was a good fit and not how do we pivot um I think it's just incredible and I've been floored ever since October when I first heard about it and you know continue um just to be really impressed with it I think um an important part of this as well when we talk about de-stigmatizing um is the lessons that your counselors do in elementary school starting in elementary school they're really giving our

[01:04:15] students the language on how to articulate things around their feeling understanding how the brain works all of these things and being okay talking about these things um what one of my children had an issue and you know I finally said do you want to talk to someone about this you know and they kind of said like like like therapy and you know and so I kind of took a bite and I said well yes and they said I have so many feelings I want to talk about that would be great you know and it's and I think you know some of these counselor lessons starting in elementary school have really primed the pump with that like on it's okay to talk about feelings here's some words to use to

[01:04:53] talk about feelings and so I think that's an important part that dovetails in this as they move on to middle school and high school and yeah so thank you for also that work that it was not in this presentation but is a really important part of of this work as well and then one question you you mentioned that there's a 90 percent increase in the attendance and hidden plain in plain sight events this year as opposed to last year I got to go to I went to one of those a couple years ago and it's really incredible the information they share with parents and

[01:05:28] they're very real about it um what do we know what we can attribute that increase to so i think having the tisks there as well to partner with the schools and to partner with our coordinator of substance use prevention intervention just having the boots on the ground to be able to do some of that work but also this year we focused a lot on bringing that down to middle school as well and to inviting middle schools and to marketing and promoting to middle schools as well to families and we've had and seen a lot of family participation at middle school as well as our high school families.

[01:06:03] Interesting. Well, it's great news to increase participation and awareness, so I appreciate it. That's all for me. Any follow-ups from my colleagues? All right, thank you so much. Thank you. All right, colleagues.

[01:06:20] Does that conclude items from the superintendent? It does. Thank you so much. The next item on the agenda is public forum. this is in the form of written comments that we received prior to the meeting colleagues did everyone receive a copy of the written comments thank you so much the next item

on the agenda is the consent agenda colleagues are there any items in the consent agenda that you would like to separate out for consideration or discussion hearing none do i have a motion on the consent

[01:06:54] agenda i move that the school board accept adopt approve and or award items 5.01 and 5.07 on the consent agenda as presented moved by mr young is there a second second seconded by mr irving all those in favor say aye aye any opposed the ayes have it the consent agenda has been approved at this time we are going to take a recess until 5 p.m for our public budget hearing welcome back it's

[01:07:34] it's five o'clock which means it's time for our budget hearing. The next item on the agenda is the public hearing to solicit input on the recommended FY 2026 annual financial plan. Mr. John Wack, Chief Financial Officer, will share some information before we proceed.

[01:07:54] - Good evening, Madam Chair, school board members and Dr. Cashwell. This evening we're holding a public hearing on the superintendent's fiscal year 2026 recommended budget that was presented on February 23rd our full 151 page budget document has been posted on our website since then. So just briefly, our fiscal year 2026 recommended budget reflects the following notable changes from the current year's adopted budget. Our general fund budget is increasing by about 29.8 million or 4.2 percent compared to the current year based on the target amount we received. Our debt service budget associated with previously approved capital project debt is essentially remaining flat.

[01:08:30] The school nutrition fund is increasing by about 3.5% due to increases in food costs, and our state and federal special revenue budgets are increasing by 2.5%, and that's primarily due to more funding for the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Overall, the operating budget from all funds is growing by about 3.8%, noting that our fiscal year 2026 figures do not yet include funding for pay raises.

[01:08:53] Those are a budget priority and will be considered later in the process. These pie charts illustrate the major revenue categories of our general fund budget, We can see the target increase of about \$29.8 million makes up the difference in fiscal year 2026, and that will likely come from a combination of state and local funds.

[01:09:14] And these pie charts illustrate our major spending categories in the general fund, and we can see that instruction remains the lion's share of our expenditures budget at over 75% in fiscal year 2026. That concludes my brief overview. Happy to answer any questions or cede the floor for any speakers. Thank you, Mr. Weck. No citizens have signed up in advance.

[01:09:35] However, for any who may be present to speak at the budget hearing, we ask that each speaker come to the microphone and clearly state your name and school affiliation. Speakers must present their remarks to the school board, not to the audience, and may provide copies of their comments to the school board clerk.

[01:09:52] The use of obscenity or defamation is strictly prohibited and will be ruled out of order. Speakers are allotted three minutes to address the school board to assist you in tracking your time. there is a timekeeping system displaying the elapsed time on the screen. Speakers will also receive a notification from me when the time has expired. The school board is here to hear from you today. We will not be responding to speakers, but we will carefully consider your comments regarding the annual financial plan. Is there anyone present who would like to speak about the recommended

[01:10:23] budget? Seeing none, that concludes the public hearing portion of our agenda. The next item on the agenda is unfinished business. I have one item of unfinished business. Colleagues, does anyone else

have unfinished business? All right. Dr. Cashwell, at the board's work session on October 24th, the board started a conversation about building capacity and future growth in Henrico County. The board continues to consider long-term boundary adjustments that may be necessitated

[01:11:03] by new school construction that's now underway. In the short term, as a follow-up to the October conversation, the board now requests that you, Dr. Cashwell, bring boundary adjustment options to the next board meeting on two specific components. First, the board would like to review options that make minor adjustments to the attendance zones for Freeman and Godwin to balance enrollment between the two. Second, the board would like to review options that take

[01:11:38] account for potential growth by examining currently planned developments impacting Henrico and Highland Springs High School. In developing options for our consideration, we request that disruption to students and families be limited to the greatest extent possible. The board also request the recommendation to include a process for thorough public input and engagement opportunities and timeline options that phase in any potential changes. The Board remains committed to minimizing

[01:12:15] disruptions to families while making focused adjustments as needed to ensure we provide HCPS students with learning environments that meet their needs. We look forward to continuing the conversation in partnership with families as we determine our next step that concludes our unfinished business any new business colleagues all right hearing none the last item on the agenda is the announcement of upcoming meetings our next meeting will be february 27th 2025 a 3 p.m work

[01:12:52] session and a five sorry in a 6 30 monthly meeting here in the new bridge auditorium times may be adjusted as needed. This meeting is adjourned.



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