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Henrico County School Board Monthly Meeting, Thursday, June 12, 2025

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[00:00:01] Good evening and welcome to the Thursday, June 12th, 2025 monthly meeting of the Henrico County School Board. The first item on the agenda is the approval of the agenda. Colleagues, do you have a motion? I move that the school board approve the agenda for today's meeting.

[00:00:19] 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 agenda has been approved. I'll now turn it over to our superintendent. - Thank you, good evening to our visitors.

[00:00:35] And for all of those in attendance, we'll begin the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, which will be followed by a moment of silence. So if you would please stand.

[00:00:53] I pledge allegiance to the flagpole. And if you would please remain standing as you're able for a moment of silence.

[00:01:20] And that concludes our moment of silence. You may be seated. We now have a number of recognition items and the first item on the agenda related to our Christie Teacher of the Year is actually gonna be pushed to our next meeting we'll be able to honor uh our christy teacher who was unable to be here so i'll turn it over to dr smith for the next recognition thank you good evening madam chair board

members and Dr. Cashwell this evening we are proud to recognize several outstanding employees for creating meaningful

[00:01:57] learning experiences for students of all abilities our recognition tonight highlights the work of Henrico County's private day specialist who is instrumental in providing services to students with disabilities. Please welcome Kim Marshall. Kim was recently named the 2025 Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities Stakeholder of the Year. One of our community partners, St. Joseph's Villa, nominated Kim for this award, noting her tireless and collaborative efforts to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. As a private day specialist,

[00:02:35] Kim collaborates with St. Joseph's Villa staff to provide specialized services and instruction students with disabilities in a private day school setting. Ultimately, the goal for students is to thrive academically and behaviorally and transition back to their homeschool. Please join me in congratulating Kim Marshall, the 2025 Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities

[00:02:58] Stakeholder of the Year. Good evening, Madam Chair, members of the board, Dr.

[00:03:18] Cashwell. With me tonight is Ms. Jenna Conley, gifted specialist for Henrico County and tonight we're honored to recognize Henrico County Public Schools Gifted Resource Teachers of the Year. Please welcome Tara Green. Tricia Rose was not able to attend tonight's meeting but we will recognize both of our Teachers of the Year. Through innovative programming, Tricia Rose Elementary Gifted Resource Teacher of the Year enhances student learning at Donahoe and Ward Elementary School. Her leadership in the math league extension and dedication to talent development are making a lasting impact on students and colleagues alike.

[00:03:57] The Secondary Gifted Resource Teacher of the Year is Tara Greene. Tara enhances the teaching and learning experiences of everyone at Brooklyn and Short Pump Middle Schools. Her creativity and genuine desire to motivate others are unmatched. She enriches the gifted education team with her valuable insights and expertise throughout the identification process.

[00:04:20] Congratulations to these outstanding educators and thank you for everything you do to support your students and colleagues.

[00:04:40] This final recognition will surely hit a high note as we celebrate Henrico County Public Schools selection as the best community for music. Please welcome Dr. Taylor Snow, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, who will receive this award on behalf of the school division.

[00:04:59] This is the 26th consecutive year that HCPS has been recognized as the best community for music education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation. We are only two divisions in the nation to be honored by the foundation every year since this award's inception in 1999.

[00:05:24] That is in thanks in large part to the phenomenal music teachers in our schools and Chris Mosley, the HCPS education specialist for performing arts. These dedicated music educators equip students with the skills to perform and empower them with the confidence to succeed in the classroom, on the stage, and sometimes in the recording studio. As we have seen at previous school board meetings and during school events, HCPS is blessed with incredibly talented students and music educators. Thank you, Chris for your ongoing work in support of the arts and music education and congratulations on this

[00:06:04] award the next item on the agenda is the henrico highlight and this is our chance to showcase the incredible teaching and learning happening across henrico we just wrapped up a very successful school year filled with academic athletic and personal achievements of course high school graduations are a major milestone. Nearly 3,900 members of the Class of 2025 recently crossed the

[00:06:42] stages at Tucker High School and the Henrico Sports and Events Center to receive their diplomas. Let's take a look. I hereby call this commencement ceremony's order. Please rise for the Class of 2025.

[00:07:08] Let's bring that Blue Devil energy. Bring that Springer Nation energy. As the Class of 2025 begins their processional. Over the past four years, it has felt as if we were climbing a mountain. Today, we reach the summit. With faith, a good support system, and a drive that never ceases, we can do anything we put our minds to. Don't forget, choose to show up, choose to take

[00:07:47] risks, choose to be you, and choose gratitude. Laugh louder, forget faster, say thank you more often. If you find an obstacle on your path, tear it down. And if you can't, take the scenic route. It won't hurt you. The best thing that you can do for yourself is be able to adapt. Be willing to change whatever needs to be changed because life only ever throws curveballs. We didn't just earn diplomas. We earned strength, resilience, and lifelong memories. I'm standing in a room full of people with incredibly bright futures ahead of them. Legacies aren't given to you. They're

[00:08:21] built by you day by day choice by choice if you're gonna change the world then change the world and if you're gonna give a graduation speech then give a graduation speech so congratulations classes 125 and I know everyone here will go and do amazing things with the candidates for graduation please stand by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the Commonwealth of Virginia the - The Henrico County School Board.

[00:08:57] - And on the recommendation of the faculty and administration. - I declare these candidates graduates with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining there too. - Will the graduates turn their tassels?

[00:09:33] - Eden Nasir Farrell.

[00:10:27] - Willis Zella.

[00:10:49] - Madeline Whetstone Anderson.

[00:10:59] - Sophia Giselle Castillo.

[00:11:54] - Congratulations to our graduates, their families, and the countless HCPS educators who helped them along the way. We cannot wait to see what this amazing group of students does next. Well, as you saw in that video, graduation ceremonies are extraordinary events filled with pomp and circumstance.

[00:12:15] They go off so smoothly that it is hard to remember the months of work that go on behind the scenes and the attention to detail that goes into planning 11 individual school ceremonies. Tonight, we celebrate the team that makes that happen as our Heart of Henrico.

[00:12:33] Rick Lilly, Education Specialist for Student Activities, and his assistant, Lene Davenport, are joining us this evening to receive a token of our appreciation.

[00:12:54] This dynamic duo works with principals for months on graduation logistics. They can tell you exactly how many graduates there are and where their families will park. They ensure programs are ready, the stage is built, and the ceremonies are on time and run smoothly.

[00:13:14] Graduation day is a magical day for so many families in Henrico. Rick and Lene, thank you for everything you do to make that happen. You truly are the heart of Henrico. Thank you.

[00:13:33] - Thank you so much, Dr. Cashwell. Mr. Young, would you please read our mission statement? - Absolutely, Madam Chair. Enricle County Public Schools, an innovative leader in educational excellence, will actively engage our students in diverse educational, social, and civic learning experiences that inspire and empower them to become contributing citizens.

[00:13:53] Thank you so much. The next item on our agenda is public forum. This is the time where citizens are invited to address the school board on any matter of concern about the school division. Citizens have signed up in advance and will be given three minutes to address the school board.

[00:14:08] Speakers will be called 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. After stating your name, please place the number you were given in the cart next to 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

[00:14:43] 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 when the time has expired. The School Board is here today to listen to you. We will not be responding to speakers' concerns or questions during the public forum. However, a Hemrico staff member will follow up with speakers stakeholders have also had the opportunity to provide written comments through an online form in advance of the meeting those comments are shared with the school board members

[00:15:18] prior to the meeting and posted in public record on board docs equal consideration and attention will be given to both written and in-person comments we appreciate your attendance here this evening and for providing your input the first speaker is speaker number one hello my name is Lisa Dyer and I am the theater teacher at J.R. Tucker high school. Hi, school board members.

[00:15:47] I'm returning to this podium to first thank you for making some small positive changes for theater teachers and to also explain that the work is not done. Over the past three years, I have advocated for compensation, communication, and consideration for theater teachers in the county. There are so many questions surrounding what has is and will happen regarding the high school dramatics head stipend and whether the vhs1 stipend is still on the table to date i have not signed my extended responsibilities contract because doing so means i commit myself to 600 less than i did than i got

[00:16:23] last year why doesn't the county give us all stipend contracts at once it's like someone's hoping theater teachers forget about the 1600 stipend and just keep doing our job for less The new budget does call for high school theater teachers to receive the same stipend as the head basketball coach, which is a really good start.

[00:16:42] But theater teachers deserve a head coach stipend for each show we direct, period. Other coaching stipends are valid for a single season. Why, ours covers more than 180 days. Why? I teach full-

time and run the school's theater company. I'm more than a coach.

[00:17:00] I'm a director, designer, producer, costumer, carpenter, choreographer, programmer, contract liaison, purchase and budget manager, painter, PR rep, advocate, marketing consultant, ticket seller, counselor, and more. I and my colleagues deserve fair compensation.

[00:17:16] A communication gap exists considering usage repair and maintenance of our school auditoriums. There is no countywide protocol regarding auditorium usage repair or maintenance. The current strategy seems to be wait until things are falling out of the ceiling or the teacher is in the middle of a nervous breakdown to get things done.

[00:17:32] That's unacceptable. It's nearly impossible for us to get a straight answer or request help because there's literally no one in charge of auditorium upkeep in HCPS. In the four years of being in the new Tucker Building, the sound system needed to be rewired, the lighting system needed to be completely reprogrammed and both the light and sound boards needed to be replaced.

[00:17:53] Why is the theater teacher responsible for making sure things are working in an auditorium that is literally used by everyone? There is a lack of consideration of theater teachers regarding procedures of safety, licensing, purchasing, and stipends.

[00:18:09] Theater is a part of performing arts in HCPS, but as much as our specialist tries to advocate for us, there still is no theater person at central office, which is probably why theater teachers are not really considered in the processes or communication. It's why we are overlooked and treated like anything but experts in our field.

[00:18:28] Theater teachers are so incredibly invested in our students, in our schools, in our subject area. We should be treated like professionals. Please let us know how we can help you to help us. We are ready to find solutions to keep moving forward. Thank you. Thank you.

[00:18:46] Speaker number two. Hello, my name is Jen Himes, and I'm a parent and a stakeholder from the Tuckahoe District.

[00:19:03] I'm here to speak on behalf of Parents for More Play, a group of parent advocates from Henrico County concerning recess time. Good evening, Madam Chair, Dr. Cashwell, and school board members. Recess is not a luxury, it is a fundamental need for every child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development.

[00:19:25] Research shows that regular unstructured playtime boosts cognitive performance, improves classroom behavior, strengthens peer relationships, and even reduces disciplinary issues. Despite this, many students in Henrico County Public Schools are not guaranteed adequate recess each day.

[00:19:42] As parents for more play, we believe that this must change. The American Academy of Pediatrics affirms that recess is critical for healthy development and should never be withheld for academic or behavioral reasons. Children need time and space to simply be kids, to laugh, explore, create, move, and build friendships.

[00:20:02] Recess gives them that essential opportunity. It nurtures their overall health and supports the foundational skills they need to thrive both in and out of the classroom. Device-free indoor recess options also provide meaningful screen-free social experiences when outdoor play isn't possible.

[00:20:19] Whether it's running, imagining, chatting, or simply being, recess helps kids return to class more focused, happier, and ready to learn. We are calling on Henrico County Public Schools to adopt a minimum of 45 minutes of daily recess for elementary schools with an emphasis on outdoor free play and engaging device-free indoor alternatives.

[00:20:42] Our children deserve a school day that honors their development, well-being and joy. Virginia state law states that recess may be included in the calculation of required instructional hours for elementary school provided that it does not exceed 15% of the required instructional hours. Henrico's six and a half hour school day. That would be about 58 minutes per day. Let's work together to find 15 to increase recess to 45 minutes a day for all elementary school students in Henrico County. Many counties around Virginia have already implemented more recess. Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William, Suffolk, Norfolk, Shenandoah, and Hanover counties have all

[00:21:18] seen the value of additional recess. Most recently Hanover County has extended their recess block at the elementary level from 30 minutes to 40 minutes henrico or excuse me hanover also has a six and a half hour school day we all share the goal of helping our students succeed not just academically but socially and emotionally as well research consistently shows that unstructured play and regular movement throughout the day improves focus behavior learning outcomes and mental health recess isn't just a break it's an essential part of a well-rounded education and healthy child development thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your continued commitment to supporting the needs of all students i would like to submit our petition to you

[00:21:58] including over 500 signatures along with a copy of the document that hanover county is using to extend elementary recess thank you thank you so much and if you um is it a paper copy yeah you can hand there's a folder in there where the numbers are okay you can put sorry with the thank you so much i appreciate it all right um speaker number three i'm tom harris drama teacher

[00:22:33] at short pump middle and part of a diverse group of theater educators all of whom are dedicated professionals in our classrooms we pour the foundation and explain the tools to be used but it's not until we enter the extracurricular realm and unite with kids on the stage or in the studio shop or booth that we build dreams of comedy and tragedy and make memories that last a lifetime. In the spring of 24 we met with county officials and addressed this board regarding lack of communication, facility conditions, and stipends, ESS. Steps were taken in the right direction but

[00:23:10] the dialogue stopped and here we are. I had the privilege of serving on the TAC committee this year and feel using that model to foster open communication with theater teachers would prove beneficial. ESS pay grades should be more equitable and better reflect the time, effort, and complexity of each position. We are responsible for every aspect of our drama program. This year, the middle school ESS moved from pay grade 12 to 18. In the adopted AFP 2526, there are 33 secondary head coach

[00:23:46] designations with pay grades ranging from ESS 18 to ESS 46, middle school drama being the only one designated an ESS 18. All ESS contracts are categorized as annual, but the days of service varies with position. Athletic coaches are paid for the season, but drama's season is the full year. My 2324 data was dramatic ESS level 12 183 days \$930 assistant track ESS level 23 39 days

[00:24:24] \$1,440. For 2526 my offer is for dramatics ESS level 18 183 days \$1,403 for assistant track ESS it would be level 23, 38 days, \$1,774. Our auditoriums have current and future needs which have gone

ignored and should be addressed ASAP. Whether it be a cosmetic question, one of functionality, or one regarding school and public safety, the person most knowledgeable regarding

[00:25:01] them is the theater teacher. Again this year, we bandaged an antique lighting system, picked up broken tiles off the floor, and rented or borrowed sound equipment to make the musical happen. I encourage you to listen tonight, read the submissions, and consult with us regularly. We are here to help and we want to make it right for the

[00:25:23] students. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number four. Good evening. My name is Marlene Sherlock and our family lives in the Fairfield District. First, I'd like to thank Chief of Staff Holly Coy for reaching out to me to inquire about my comments last month on our issues with sunscreen and over-the-counter medications. Not only did

[00:26:01] she patiently listen to my account, but thankfully, and after many years, I finally see changes reflected in the proposed student code of conduct you'll vote on later this evening. I would note, though, that's the first time I've had someone follow up with me, even though at your introduction of the public forum, you mentioned that a staffer would.

[00:26:20] While on the topic of public comment, I'd again ask you to reconsider your requirement to sign up in advance. While it does require just a phone call, and I always enjoy speaking with Ms. Burton beforehand, it seems like a dispensable step in an effort to allow the public to speak up.

[00:26:41] I realize when things get hectic or there's a controversial proposal, you may be faced with people who are rather passionate about their issues. But if our own Henrico County Board of Supervisors can clearly state that registration is not required to participate in their meetings, it seems like you could too.

[00:27:00] How does knowing who or how many are coming change your preparation other than realizing you may be in for a longer evening? You already and understandably limit our time and have security staff nearby. If you routinely had dozens of speakers, I could perhaps understand, but how does turning away that one person who comes here with the intent to speak thinking they'd have that opportunity like your meetings used to be and many other elected body meetings still are. Be brave. If you really want to hear from the public, make it as easy as possible. Next year will be our family's

[00:27:40] last year in the HCPS system and our child will be in Ms. Wesson's civics class. She routinely requires her students to attend a public meeting and I'm sure you've seen some of them here before. I hope a few take the extra step of actually addressing you about a concern, as it is at the local level where, as citizens, I believe we have the most and best opportunity to opine on a policy that most directly affects us.

[00:28:06] For a student, it just doesn't get more personal than what happens in their school. I know you will listen to them as past student speakers routinely get your overt attention, and rightly so. They are the reason we all do this finally I'll leave you with something to ponder over the summer short as it is please start any boundary adjustment studies with the cleanest data set you can consider residency checks and I know current board regulations already allow for them and perhaps

[00:28:39] it's time to do so on a more regular basis good night enjoy your summer remember band camp starts next month. Thank you, speaker number four. That concludes, let me just double check, but I

believe that concludes our list of speakers that have signed up this evening and concludes our public forum. Thank you for all who participated. Colleagues, the next item on the agenda is the

[00:29:08] consent agenda. And so this includes items 8.01 through 8.56. So a lot of policies that we have reviewed at multiple meetings, including earlier in the work session. Are there any of those 56 items that you would like to separate out for separate discussion or consideration? Yes, Ms. Kinsella. Yes, I have three items that I would just like to highlight. And I'll begin with item

[00:29:43] number 8.07, which is the award of construction contract for chiller replacements at two schools. Those two schools are Hermitage High School and Fairfield Middle School. The second item is item 8.08 that we discussed this afternoon at the work session. It's the approval of the schematic design for the renovation of Johnson Elementary School bond project from the 2022 bond and then the last

[00:30:15] item I'd just like to highlight is item 8.48 the approval of the 2020 2025 2026 code of student conduct thank you Miss Kinsella any other items that members would like to highlight separate out questions discussion all right I'm hearing none do I have a motion about the consent agenda I move that the school board accept adopt approve and or award items 8.01 through 8.56

[00:30:51] on the consent agenda is presented moved by Mr. Irving is there a second second second by Miss Kinsella all those in favor aye aye any opposed the eyes have it the consent agenda has been approved the next item on the agenda is unfinished business colleagues any unfinished business to address this evening hearing none the next item is new business colleagues do you have any new business you would like to address this evening hearing none the final item is the

[00:31:27] announcement of upcoming meetings um our next meeting will be August Miss Burton could you thank you 14th 2025 I'm here in the new bridge auditorium it will be a work session beginning at 3 p.m. the times may be adjusted as needed we hope that everyone has a restful and rejuvenating summer and we'll see you back here in August this meeting is adjourned



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