

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Donna Booth, Clerk of the School Board

(804)529-6134

[dbooth@nucps.net](mailto:dbooth@nucps.net)

**January 11, 2021 - Heathsville, VA** The Northumberland County Public Schools' School Board met virtually for a regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public through Zoom audio conference calling as a result of COVID-19 guidelines.

### 2020-2021 School Calendar Change

The Board approved the following updates to the 2020-2021 School Calendar:

Friday, January 22, 2021 is now a Teacher Workday - no students report to class.

Thursday, May 20, 2021 is now the last day of school

The updated 2020-2021 School Calendar is now available on [www.nucps.net](http://www.nucps.net) or [Click Here for Current School Calendar](#).

### Closed Meeting Action Items

The School Board approved the retirement of **Mr. Jeffrey Cordrey**, NES Administrative Assistant, effective January 31, 2021. Mr. Cordrey has been with Northumberland County Public Schools since 2003. He has served as paraprofessional and administrative assistant to the counseling department. The Board thanked Mr. Cordrey for his dedicated service.

### Reorganization of the Board:

The Board approved **Mrs. Betty Christopher** as Board Chair for 2021. **Mrs. Gayle Sterrett** was approved as Vice Chair. **Ms. Donna Booth** as Clerk of the Board and **Mrs. Shelley Vanlandingham** as Deputy Clerk was approved. The Board approved the meeting date and time to remain the 2nd Monday of the month at 6PM, with a closed meeting, if needed, at 5PM. Meeting location if meeting in person will be the NMS/NHS Auditorium. The Board appointed **Mrs. Dana O'Bier** as Northumberland's representative on the Northern Neck Technical and Northern Neck Alternative Education Boards. **Mr. Carl Perez** was appointed as representative on the Chesapeake Bay

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

Governor's School Board. **Mrs. Betty Christopher** will serve as Virginia School Board Association Delegate for Northumberland County School Board. **Ms. Denise Mazyck** will serve as Alternate Delegate to the Virginia School Board Association Board. **Ms. Denise Mazyck** was approved to be the Board liaison to the Northumberland County Education Association.

The Board approved to adopt the Virginia School Board Code of Conduct. [Click Here to View Code of Conduct.](#)

## **Other Action by the Board:**

The 2021-2022 Budget Calendar was amended to approve dates for the January and February work sessions. 2021-2022 Budget WorkSession #1 will be held Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 12 PM. The 2021-2022 Budget WorkSession #2 will be held Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 1 PM. The meetings will be open to the public telephonically using Zoom. The 2021-2022 Budget Calendar is posted on [www.nucps.net](http://www.nucps.net) website.

## **Presentations/Reports**

### **Virginia School Principals Appreciation Week - January 24-30, 2021**

**Superintendent Dr. Holly Wargo** informed the Board that Governor Ralph Northam declared January 24-30, 2021 as Virginia School Principals Appreciation Week. The State Superintendent of Instruction message in part read, "The role of the principal as the instructional leader of the school is critically important to ensure students are provided the opportunity to learn. Our principals work diligently to help students and teachers excel, and their leadership and hard work are essential to the success of our schools. They deserve all the recognition and praise we can give them - this school year especially - as they have led through a school year with enormous challenges." The School Board recognized NHS Principal **Dr. Travis Burns**, NMS Principal **Mr. Patrick Simmons**, and NES Principal **Mrs. Stephanie Baker** for their contributions to Northumberland County Schools.

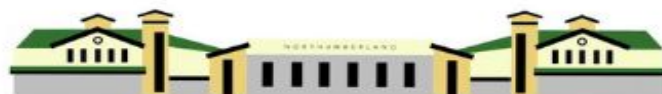
## **JLARC Report Update**

**Dr. Jamie Sears**, Director of Special Education & Student Services, provided the Board with an update on the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) research study of Virginia's K-12 Special Education Services completed October 2020. The

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

JLARC conducts program evaluation, policy analysis and oversight of state agencies on behalf of the General Assembly. **Dr. Sears** reported that the graduation rate of special education students lags behind the graduation rate of students without disabilities, but the percentage of graduates is increasing. From 2008 to 2018, graduation rates of students without disabilities increased from 81% to 91% and graduation rates of students with disabilities increased from 38% to 61%. **Dr. Sears** reported that dropout rates in both groups have decreased 4%. The following self-assessments areas will implement changes • monitoring/audits • Verbiage/Timeline clarification ■ Eligibility ■ Transition ■ Diplomas ■ IEP Components • Professional Development (all teachers/administrators) ■ Licensure requirements ■ Teacher recruitment and retention ■ Inservice and preservice • Extracurricular/Non-academic access.

## Public Comment

**Ms. Madeline Lee**, NHS Band Director, submitted a budget request to increase the instructional line for Band from \$6,000 to \$25,000. She explained that the additional financial support is needed for NMS/NHS classes and NHS Marching Band instrumental repairs, other band equipment, uniforms and new instruments.

## Superintendent's Report

**Dr. Wargo** provided an update on COVID-19, Instructional changes and Vaccine information. Northumberland County Schools partners with the Three Rivers Health District to monitor COVID-19 and its impact on students and employees.

Northumberland has been offering 100% Virtual Instruction and will continue through January 15 2021. Monday, January 18, 2021 is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and a school holiday. In-person learning is scheduled to resume on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

Northumberland County Schools is partnering with Northumberland County Director of Emergency Services Wes Packett to administer a vaccination clinic open to school employees only. School employees are being surveyed to provide a count of employees who will receive the vaccination. This will be a two shot vaccination, manufactured by ModernaTX, Inc., given one month (28 days) apart in the upper arm.

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

## **The School Board heard Instructional Reports updates by the school principals:**

**Dr. Holly Wargo**, provided the Board with a summary of **NES Principal Stephanie Baker's** instructional report. Mrs. Baker introduced Ms. LeNiesha Gainey as NES School Counselor. Ms. Gainey will be working with Kindergarten, 4th and 5th grade students, teachers and families. Mrs. Baker reported that there are 324 students enrolled in the Hybrid Learning Option: Track B (Monday/Tuesday) 101 students; Track C (Thursday/Friday) 107 students; and Track D (4 Days In-Person) 116 students. There are 226 students enrolled in the Virtual Learning option. Beginning January 19, 2021, students who are chronically absent and failing 2 or more subjects will be offered the opportunity to attend in-person 4 days per week as long as all social distancing protocols are followed.

**Dr. Holly Wargo**, provided the Board with a summary of **NMS Principal Patrick Simmons'** instructional report. Mr. Simmons reported that currently 46% or 125 students are enrolled in hybrid learning. NMS teachers are continuing discussions on strategies to reach struggling students and equitable grading practices during a pandemic. NMS teachers and counselors are reaching out to parents and students through the Remind App, Canvas, student emails and by phone to troubleshoot issues and help find resources for success. Beginning January 19, 2021, students who are chronically absent and failing 2 or more subjects will be offered the opportunity to attend in-person 4 days per week following social distancing protocols.

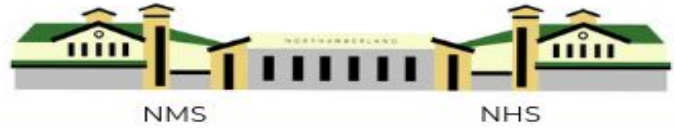
**Dr. Holly Wargo**, provided the Board with a summary of **NHS Principal Dr. Travis Burns'** instructional report. On Wednesday, December 16, 2020, teachers at NHS spent the afternoon engaged in professional learning workshops offered by current staff members. Teachers were required to choose two workshops to attend. On Wednesday, January 13, 2021, a second round of student listening sessions are scheduled. The purpose of the listening sessions is to obtain feedback from students on how NHS can improve learning experiences in the hybrid and virtual settings.

## **Standards of Learning (SOL) Test Update**

**Director of Testing, Accountability & Data Technology Mrs. Virginia Booth**

informed the Board that Northumberland Middle and High School SOL testing has been postponed. A decision on rescheduling dates and times will be made on January 25,

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



2021. Mrs. Booth notified the Board that the State testing window will close on February 19, 2021. Schools are still expected to administer SOL tests per Virginia Department of Education guidelines.

**Dr. Holly Wargo** provided the Board with a summary from **Director of Instructional Technology Mrs. Javarnda Ashton**. Mrs. Ashton reported that teachers, staff, students and families have received a welcome package and training video from Incident IQ showing them how to access the new reporting system. The fiber wiring has been installed at the Heathsville School Board Office building. Next, the fiber equipment will be relocated to the new location before Windstream can activate the phone system.

**Dr. Holly Wargo** provided the Board with a summary from **Mrs. Stacey Branem, Director of Transportation**. The transportation department continues to disinfect and sanitize buses and vehicles on a weekly basis. **Mrs. Branem** reports currently that one van is transporting a student to Richmond, and one bus transporting students to Zion Baptist Church for virtual learning. Meal delivery is expected to begin the week of January 18-22, 2021.

**Dr. Holly Wargo** provided the Board with a summary from **Director of Maintenance and Operations, Mr. Jeff Brann**.

--The Quarterly fire and fixed fire inspection systems were conducted upon return from Winter Break. All systems passed inspection in the NMS/NHS facility. All systems passed in the NES facility with the exception of the smoke detection shut down of the new HVAC units installed earlier this year. Currently we are working to resolve this with Carrier Corporation and Honeywell.

--All water utilities have been secured at the old SBO to prevent the freezing of any plumbing and all fixed piping was adequately drained. This was conducted due to all heating in this building being turned off.

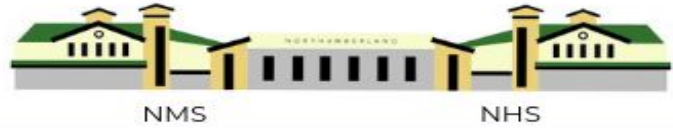
--Drinking water inspections are up to date and the maintenance department is still working diligently to ensure all adequate chlorine levels are maintained throughout each facility. This has been an ongoing challenge without the assistance of normal water usage by teachers and staff.

--LED light conversions are still being conducted on a case by case basis throughout each facility.

--The East Bound 25 MPH light sign has been fabricated and is on site. The concrete mounting pad has been poured and the sign installation will hopefully be conducted NLT



# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



the week of January 11, 2021. We also have the 4G modem upgrade on site and are working with the BLINKLINK schedule provider to ensure our most up to date school schedule is loaded.

--The maintenance department is still researching the most viable means of lighting for the bus garage fuel station. The station has never had overhead lighting and this poses a serious safety concern. We are working with Triad Corp. to find an inexpensive solution that can be conducted within the month of January.

--The maintenance department is currently working on the rooftop HVAC unit that supplies heat to the NMS/NHS band and medical space. The unit currently is suffering from return fan bearing failures that are very difficult to access. Our goal is to fabricate a plywood structure with the load bearing capabilities to hold a technician while inside the unit. This will prevent anyone or thing from falling through the overhead.

--The Maintenance department is working towards the replacement of a 7.5 ton heat pump at the new SBO facility. Two other units are not functioning properly and we are working to resolve this as soon as possible.

--Mike Wallace is drawing up plans and devising a materials list to fabricate a privacy wall for Ms. Donna Booth's new office space.

--Currently the maintenance department has an adequate supply of ice melt for any possible winter storms in the near future but only has one functional plow truck.

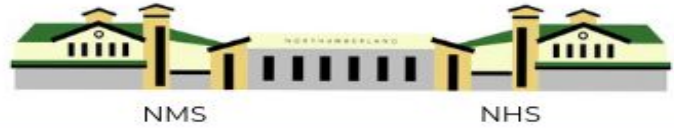
--The custodial department is continuing to work diligently to ensure our facilities are as clean and sanitary as possible. All spaces that occupy an individual are continuing to be sterilized by the Total 360 fogging system.

--There are only three remaining water fountain stations that need to be replaced with the touch free bottle filling stations. This completion will be determined by funding availability.

**Dr. Holly Wargo** provided the Board with a summary on behalf of **Director of School Nutrition Mrs. Saunee Hamlett**. Distribution of meals resumed on January 4, 2021 with curbside meal pickup on January 6, 2021 continuing with meals for seven days of breakfast and lunch. Tentative information has been received on P-EBT benefits will continue through the school year. Mrs. Hamlett will keep the Board informed as more information is provided. Families are encouraged to utilize the meals offered at no cost from Northumberland County Schools.

## Board Comments

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Mrs. Dana O' Bier** gave the Board a summary of the Northern Neck Technical Center and Northern Neck Alternative Education Virtual Meeting held on December 1, 2020. Dr. Trey Davis is the new Executive Superintendent for the Northern Neck Technical Board. The Technical Center is focusing on communications during the closing using messenger software and are asking parents to update their information with their home school.

**Ms. Denise Mazyck** reported suggestions from her district regarding parents having problems with helping students after schools' normal hours. She wishes the Board to consider a "hot line" option that would be operated and maintained by school personnel for access after the regular school day.

**Mr. Carl Perez** reported concerns about attendance and sports participation, as well as, checking on students who are not engaged.

Dr. Wargo stated the steps that are currently being utilized: weekly attendance meetings and school counselors contact with families. She also stated attendance during the pandemic is not unique to Northumberland; all school divisions are looking into extended school days, 1:1 tutoring, immediate Intervention & Recovery programs, as well as extended summer school programs.

Superintendent Wargo stated "... our Division-wide leadership team is working to establish Intervention and Recovery Programs, which will be a menu of options, for students and families needing extra support. We will never give up on any of our students, and we recognize there is not a one size fits all approach for our students. I will keep you informed."