

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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**March 8, 2021 - Heathsville, VA** The Northumberland County Public Schools' School Board met in-person for a regular meeting. The meeting was open to the public in-person and through Zoom audio conference calling as a result of COVID-19 guidelines.

### Expanded Reopening

Northumberland County Public Schools will **combine current hybrid students in the Gold Group and Green Group so that all current hybrid students may attend four (4) days per week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday beginning Monday, March 15, 2021.** Wednesdays will remain 100% asynchronous and virtual for all students.

The school division will monitor the safety of the expanded reopening before approving for 100% virtual students to change to the four-day in-person schedule. Please note 100% virtual students/families who wish to change to in-person learning may join a waiting list using the Parent Portal in PowerSchool. [Click here for Instructions](#)

### Temporary Covid-19 Leave Regulation Adopted

The Board approved Regulation GCBD-R11 Emergency Paid Sick Leave on March 8, 2021. The Regulation addresses the use of emergency paid leave for employees who quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19. [Click here for a copy of Regulation GCBD-R11](#)

### Closed Meeting Action Items

The School Board approved the following personnel as Mentorship Champions:

**NES: Michele Jennings, Heather Klein, Sheila McGlothlin, Jessica Rogers, Jamie Sabia, Briann Salatino, and Sue Swift;**

**NMS: Trinity Bea, Marvin Johnson and Quame Green;**

**NHS: Trinity Bea, Derek Tomek, and Margaret Harp.**

The Board approved **Teresa Vanlandingham as JV Volleyball Coach.**

The Board accepted **the retirements of Michael Stevenson and Bernice Stevenson**, effective June 30, 2021. The Board publicly thanked Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson for their dedicated service to the education of students.

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## Other Closed Meeting Action Items

The Board approved **redefining a vacant custodian position to a maintenance specialist position.** **Mr. Jeff Brann, Director of Operations, Maintenance and Facilities** cited the need of an additional technician for the following reasons: 1) increase efficiency in completing work orders; 2) increase in daily safety system inspections; and 3) increase in productivity for completing in house projects. Mr. Brann expressed this additional position will result in cost savings in the area of HVAC maintenance and other outsourced maintenance services.

## Presentations/Reports

The School Board recognized **Mrs. Stacey Rice-Lee for achieving National Board Certification (NBC).** NBC is a voluntary, advanced teaching credential that goes beyond state licensure. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certifies teachers who successfully complete its rigorous certification process in the areas of Content Knowledge; Differentiated Instruction; Teaching Practice & Learning Environment; and Effective & Reflective Practitioner. Mrs. Lee teaches Grade 8 English/Language Arts at Northumberland Middle School. She holds a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in English with an emphasis in education and English Literature from Old Dominion University. She also is endorsed as a Reading Specialist.

**Mrs. Sue Swift, NES Librarian & Media Specialist, announced *The Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White as the selection for One School, One Book.** Preparations and celebrations kicked off to coincide with the 100 days of school activities with a drive through pickup (175 families participated). Other activities include a trivia question each morning on WRAR radio station where students can win prizes for the correct answer.. **Mrs. Swift thanked the Reedville Bait Company and Alpha Delta Kappa** for donations that provided a book for every elementary student. Her hope is that the tradition of One School, One Book continues for many years.

**NHS Principal Dr. Travis Burns provided an update regarding athletics and activities at Northumberland High School.** The NFHS Network will provide live streaming of home athletic events within the next couple of weeks. Homecoming Week is March 8-12, 2021, ending with the homecoming football game against St. Michael's. Indoor Track completed at the State Competition at Liberty University on March 2-3, 2021. Several members of the team placed: 4 x 4 relay team of Grant Biddlecomb, Teagan Mulins, Tom Neale, and Malik Hickman placed 11th; Jay Bea 9th place in shot put; Judah Perez 12th place in shot put; 10th place in hurdles was Teagan Mullins; Grant Biddlecome placed 9th in 500 meter; Camdin Sisk placed 7th in the 1600 and 9th in the 3200. Fall Sports (volleyball football, golf, cross country and field hockey) regional play begins April 12, 2021. Spring conditioning started for baseball, softball, and boys' soccer. Dr. Burns recognized Abby Jennings as a contributor in the Varsity Brand Sports Calendar.

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## Superintendent's Report

**Dr. Holly Wargo announced the overview of the Six Year Planning Process.** “We are excited to continue with the strategic planning for Northumberland County Public Schools. Last year we began the preliminary process; however, it was necessary to pause due to the impact of the Covid-19 school closures. At that time our focus pivoted to more critical and urgent priorities in order to offer remote instruction,” stated Wargo.

The goal of the strategic plan will be to provide a clear vision for the Northumberland County Public Schools' future and a **blueprint for excellence in our schools and beyond**. This plan will be designed in **partnership with students, parents, school personnel and community members**. The goals and objectives of the plan will **serve as a map and compass for maneuvering the complex tasks and intentional decision-making associated with equity, access, and opportunity for all students**. The plan will be designed to **maximize community and division resources**. NCPS will partner with our **Equity Taskforce** to embed recommendations for every student's success.

**Ms. Donna Booth, Director of Finance**, informed the Board that the next budget meeting is **March 16, 2021** at 12 noon at the School Board Office, Heathsville, VA for the Superintendent's Presentation of the 2021-2022 Proposed School Board Budget.

**Mrs. Virginia Booth, Director of Data, Accountability, and Instructional Technology**, provided a report on the **Waiting List for Virtual Students who wish to attend in-person four (4) days per week**. Students currently on the Waiting List:

NES: 13

NMS: 5

NHS: 10

Division Total: 28

**Mrs. Stephanie Baker, Principal of NES**, provided an instructional report. Baker highlighted NES Music Teacher Ms. Sarah Keller, who is celebrating Music in Our Schools Month at NES. Keller will create a Masked Musician bulletin board display with fun facts about NES teachers. In addition, the NES Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS) team will hold monthly virtual roundtable discussions on virtual learning so that teachers may share strategies and practice that are successful for concurrent hybrid students and virtual students. Currently NES welcomes 357 students who attend two days per week and 196 students who attend 100% virtually.

**Mr. Patrick Simmons, Principal of NMS**, provided instructional highlights. Simmons spotlighted increased daily attendance numbers for in-person learning. “This is in part due to the start of the last cohort and outreach to families of special populations, as well as improved attendance of current hybrid students,” Simmons stated. Simmons also provided the School Board with a report focused on “Building

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Cultural Competence at NMS” which outlined professional development and school improvement efforts.

**Dr. Travis Burns, Principal of NHS, announced additional information regarding instruction.**

Burns highlighted mentor champions including **Mrs. Margaret Harp, Mr. Derek Tomek, and Ms. Trinity Bea**. The purpose of the mentor champion program is to provide students with an additional layer of support in earning credit for high school classes. Each mentor champion works with five to ten students.

**Mr. Adam Letizia, Director of Instruction & Student Support Services, provided updates regarding the Program of Studies, Recruiting, and the 2021-2022 Calendar Recommendation.** The School Board adopted Calendar Option 2 with a teacher start date of August 9, 2021 and students return August 16, 2021. [Click here for 2021-2022 School Calendar](#) Mr. Letizia reported that the Program of Studies team is reviewing and hopes to have approval for the Board soon. He also reported that Teacher Job Fairs are held virtually and has received information from about 15 colleges and universities.

**Mrs. Sophronia Smith, Director of Federal, State, & Local Programs and School Improvement, provided an overview of the Title IV Grant and VTSS.** The Board approved the Title IV - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant in the amount of \$37,679.09. Since 2017, Title IV has focused and implemented strategies and activities to support a safe and healthy school climate and to curb peer aggression and bullying at NMS. Mrs. Smith updated the Board on the VTSS Grant funding (\$25,000) that has been received. Each school’s allocations are based on school enrollment. The Board approved to request a special appropriation to the Board of Supervisors.

**Dr. Jamie Sears, Director of Special Education & Student Support Services, provided a First Read of the 2020-2021 Special Education Annual Plan.** The Annual Plan is divided into two funding sources: Part B 611 Funds in the amount of \$307,047.00 and Part B 619 Funds in the amount of \$7,270.00. Part B 611 funds are used for salary and benefits to fund four special education teachers. Part B 619 funds are used to partially fund the Early Childhood Special Education program located at Northumberland Elementary School. The Board is expected to vote on the 2020-2021 Special Education Annual Plan at the April 12, 2021 school board meeting.

**Dr. Holly Wargo** provided the Board with updates and highlights from various departments:

**Educational Technology: Director Javornda Ashton provided information** regarding the NFHS Live Streaming Sports implementation. She also shared statistics from the Incident IQ Help Requests: 158 requests submitted and resolved.

**School Nutrition: Director Saunee Hamlett reported the delivery of 21,000 breakfasts and lunches during the month of February.** The School Nutrition and Transportation Departments continue to deliver meals every Wednesday for students attending 100% virtual instruction. Mrs. Hamlett provided the board with the **Local School Wellness Regulation JFCH-R** for approval. The Regulation outlines

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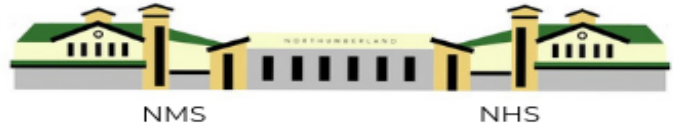
the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school day.

**Transportation:** Director Stacy Branem reported the Transportation Department continues to use the Clorox 360 machine to disinfect and sanitize all vehicles on a weekly, rotating schedule. Routes include three (3) vans; twenty (20) buses; two (2) buses for students with disabilities; as well as sports trips. announced the the addition of a service body truck to the NCPS fleet.

**Maintenance & Facilities:** Director Jeff Brann provided updates as follow:

- **Cafeteria rooftop HVAC unit** is in of a new compressor and two compressor fan motors. Also, the **HS gym supply fan and the MS supply fan need immediate replacement** as well. These items have failed and need to be replaced in order to be compliant with the Honeywell full coverage contract that was transferred from NES to NMS/NHS.
- The maintenance department is currently working on the **zero turn John Deere mower** as well as the **Toro reel mower** in preparation for the upcoming grass season. These are utilized for all sports fields and continually suffer mechanical failures due to age. We are **researching a possible trade in of both of these mowers** for one 72" gas powered zero turn mower. This would fall under next year's budget cycle.
- The maintenance department is still trying to **troubleshoot the NES sewage pump station**. This station currently will not pump down the holding tank in auto and has to have a manual pump down conducted twice a day.
- On Wednesday, 03MAR21, the maintenance department and the original installer, **Dormakaba, conducted a thorough inspection of the Shelter Emergency Lock-Down system. All batteries in the system were replaced and a complete test of the systems functionality was completed.** All tests were satisfactory. Training on the system was conducted within our department, making our department able to provide training to other staff members involved.
- The **LED lighting upgrades are being conducted** on a case by case basis.
- The maintenance department is currently doing a **rebuild on the NES kitchen steamer to include descaling the boiler side, the replacement of all high and low level pressure switches, the Low level water switch and proper grounding of all applicable electrical components.** This will provide increased reliability and added safety for all of the cafeteria staff.
- The maintenance department recently **replaced a failed shunt trip on the NMS/NHS emergency generator.** This shunt trip was preventing the adequate transfer of power between the generator and Dominion Power's service entrance, causing the generator to remain running when not needed and burning excessive amounts of fuel.

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- Our department is currently **prepping the PAES greenhouse for de-winterization.**
- Our department is trying to make **repairs to the school's outdoor soccer goals.** These goals are severely deteriorated and near impossible to reweld. This is a severe safety issue and we strongly recommend funding be approved for replacement goals.

**Mrs. Virginia Booth, Director of Data, Accountability, and Instructional Technology,** provided a synopsis of an agreement which will allow NCPS students to access the Northumberland Public Library databases and materials.

## Board Comments

**Mrs. Dana O'Bier** updated the Board on the Northern Neck Technical Center and Rappahannock Community College joint partnership application of the Claude Moore Foundation Grant in support of health care education. Their goal is to add additional health care classes in late Fall 2022. Mrs. O'Bier reported that there is one student in the Northern Neck Alternative Education Program.