

# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



NES



NMS

NHS

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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**March 9, 2020, Heathsville, VA** – The Northumberland County School Board met on Monday, March 9, 2020, at 6 pm in the Northumberland High School (NHS) & Northumberland Middle School (NMS) auditorium. The meeting began with a moment of silence and comments by **Reverend Carl Perez** recognizing the contributions of **District 2 School Board member Mrs. Mary Hooper** who passed away on Friday, March 6, 2020. Please keep Mrs. Hooper's family, friends, and school community in your thoughts during this difficult time.

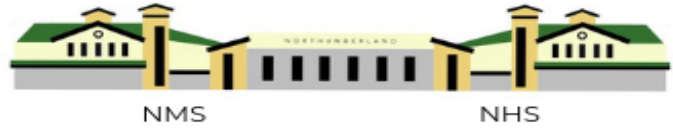


*In Memory of*

**Mrs. Mary Hooper**  
7/17/1945 - 3/6/2020

Mrs. Mary Hooper was a cherished School Board member. She was a pillar to the community and leaves a legacy of leadership, integrity and support for our schools and public education in Northumberland County

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The School Board approved the following personnel appointments, pending background check and fingerprinting, as applicable:

**Mr. Adam Letizia** has been appointed as the Director of Instruction & Student Support Services for the 2020-2021 school year. Letizia taught special education and social science, and he served as Coordinator of the Alternative Education Program at NHS. Currently Letizia serves as the Director of Special Education and Student Support Services (2017-present). Letizia earned an Associate of Applied Science degree in Criminal Justice from Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, New York; a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh; and, a Master of Arts degree in Special Education from the University of Phoenix. Mr. Letizia will be transitioning to the position of Director of Instruction, a position currently held by **Mrs. Amy Lamb** (2017-present) who announced her plans to retire in June. **Congratulations to both Adam & Amy!**

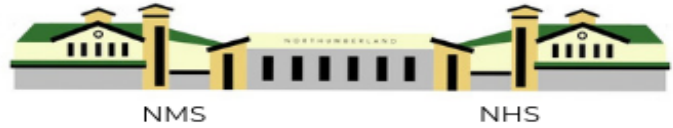
The School Board approved **Ms. Heather Rice** as a fourth grade Special Education teacher and **Ms. Yolanda Thompson** as high school Special Education teacher. In addition, current high school Social Science teacher **Mr. Ed Cockrell** will transition to the position of middle school Social Science teacher for the 2020-21 school year.

The School Board accepted the retirements of **Ms. Wendy Morecock**, high school Special Education teacher, and **Ms. Dolores Vanecek**, middle school Mathematics teacher. **Congratulations on your upcoming retirements, Wendy & Dolores!**

Approved School Nutrition Substitutes included **Ms. Teresa Davis** and **Ms. Marlene Crawley**; Bus drivers **Ms. Cheryl Haskins** and **Mr. Lawrence Green**; Car driver **Ms. Wanda Childs**; and Bus Aide **Ms. Brenda Bea**.

Spring athletic appointments include middle school softball coach **Caitlin Vanlandingham**; middle school track coach **Monet Stevenson**; middle school track assistant coach **Trayvone Rice**; baseball assistant coaches **Carrington Veney** and **Zach Kues**; softball assistant coaches **Carol Minor** and **Kevin Rice**; girls' soccer assistant coach **Lisa Roberts**; track coach **Trinity Bea**; and assistant Track coach **Aaron Lewis**.

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## Health update:

Superintendent **Dr. Holly Wargo** shared information regarding the COVID-19 concern. The school division is partnering with the Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control to implement guidance for COVID-19 prevention. Specifically Wargo outlined **steps students and families may take to help prevent illness** including

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Not touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Taking flu antivirals if prescribed by your healthcare provider if you have the flu.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

NCPS is working on a division calendar plan for makeup time in the event schools across the Commonwealth are required to close for a period of time.

## Recruiting update:

Director of Instruction **Mrs. Amy Lamb** and Region 3 Teacher of the Year **Mrs. Latasha Lee** participated in the Virginia Education Association & Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) fourth Teachers of Color Conference. The conference focused on “Transforming Policy and Practice to Drive Inclusion for Teachers of Color.” Mrs. Lee facilitated a panel discussion with Petersburg Public Schools Superintendent **Dr. Maria Pitre-Martin**; VCU School of Education Dean **Dr. Andrew Daire**; and **Delegate for the 74th District Lamont Bagby**.

**Mrs. Amy Lamb** also provided the Board with an update on the Recruiting Schedule: March 17, 2020, James Madison University; March 18, 2020, Virginia Union University; March 19, 2020, Virginia State University; March 23, 2020, Longwood University; March 25, 2020, Virginia Commonwealth University; and April 1, 2020, Christopher Newport University.

## In other news . . .

NHS Physics teacher **Mr. Gary Dickens** presented information on the “Tidewater Physics Olympics” competition hosted by Rappahannock Community College. The first “Battle of 360” was held at Essex High School on March 20, 2019, between NHS and EHS. On March 6, 2020, several teams from

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Northumberland participated. NHS students **Cameron Lewis, Morgan Ransone, and Ashton Dameron** were awarded overall 1st Place by winning the Catapult Build, Fermi Quiz and Electromagnet Build. NHS “Big Build” team included **Taylor Bayse, Malerie Hinson, Hannah Hayes and Corey Palubinski**. Other students that participated included **Haitham Jawhar, Amme Saunders, Tyler Mann, Autumn Taylor, Eve Front, Seth Hayden, Kendra O’Malley and Karen Martinez**.

NHS Social Science teacher **Mr. Sterling Harris** shared information on a Think Tank, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). He informed the Board that FIRE’s mission is to preserve the rights of students and faculty with an emphasis on freedom of speech. Mr. Harris provided the Board with a copy of the free speech comic book *Finding Your Voice*, illustrated by **Gwen Price**. He informed the Board about an upcoming visit with **United States Congressman Rob Wittman** on March 19, 2020, at 1 PM in the auditorium.

NMS School Counselor and Junior Beta Sponsor **Ms. Krista Sisk** presented Junior Beta celebrations from a recent competition: 31 students participated; six students placed in four categories. Three students, **Caroline Neale, Nora Bowles, and Jasmine Rankin** placed 3rd in Book Battle; **Olivia Newsome** placed 1st in Social Studies; **Nathalie Biddlecomb** took 2nd place in Fiber Arts; **Casey Dawson** placed second in Black and White Photography.

NHS English teacher and Senior Beta Sponsor **Ms. Karen Baker** presented Senior Beta celebrations from a recent competition in Hampton, Virginia: 24 students participated; nine students placed in seven individual competitions. In Division I: **Ali Steele**, 1st place Black and White Photography; **Layla Johnson**, 1st place Digital Art; **Camdin Sisk**, 2nd place in Fiber Arts. In Division II: **McKensey Smithart**, 1st place Color Photography and 3rd place in Drawing; **Nigeria Ball**, Digital Arts. Freshman Problem Solvers, **James Baker, Abby Jennings and Corie Minor**, placed 2nd in Academics. **Michael Hayden** completed in Science.

Junior Beta and Senior Beta will sponsor a Quarter Auction on March 27, 2020, 6 PM, at NHS to raise funds for the upcoming National Competition.

Both Junior and Senior Beta members will travel to Fort Worth, Texas, in June for the National Competition. Congratulations!

## Other actions taken by the Board:

- **Rescheduled April School Board meeting:** The regularly scheduled April School Board meeting is **rescheduled to Tuesday, April 14, 2020**, due to Monday being a school holiday.

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Closed session will begin at 5 PM in the NHS School Counseling Office and the open session will begin at 6 PM in the NHS & NMS Auditorium.

- Approval of **Senior National Beta Competition in Fort Worth, Texas, June 15-18, 2020.**
- Approval of **Junior National Beta Competition in Fort Worth, Texas, June 18-22, 2020.**