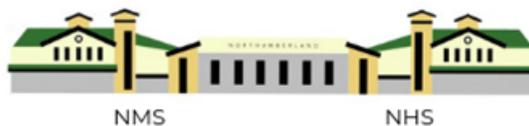


NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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

Closed Meeting Action Items

- Appointment of **Cynthia Clark, Library Media Specialist at NMS/NHS;**
- Appointment of **Lexi Rock, Interim Paraprofessional at NES;**
- Appointment of **Nicole Moore, Interim Instructional Assistant at NES;**
- Appointment of **Junior Demetrius Mykel Cox as the School Board Representative for NCPS;**
- Appointment of **Junior Jayla Beale as the Alternate School Board Representative for NCPS;**
- Approval of **Arizona Jones, part time School Nutrition professional;**
- Approval for one part time interim behavior support staff position;
- Approval of **substitutes: Domonique Thomas, Hannah Lewis, Edward Weinberg, Brantley Swift and Marlies Derby (pending completed paperwork);**
- Approval of **Winter Sports coaches: Micheal Stevenson, Boy's Basketball Head; Kevin Keeve, Wrestling; Shanita Curry, Cheerleader Coach; Trinity Bea, Indoor Track; Aaron Lewis, Boys Basketball; Tony Starks, Boys Basketball Assistant; Kyle Jones, Boys Basketball Assistant; Imaya Brown, Cheerleading Assistant; Lewis Howard, Girls Basketball Head; Wayne Carter, Girls Basketball Assistant; Terrell Diggs, Girls Basketball Assistant; Jonathan Boarman, Wrestling Assistant; and Karen Parker, Scholastic Bowl.**

Public Meeting

Presentations / Recognitions

Coordinator of Talented & Gifted Programs Mrs. Shauna McCranie and 5th grade Science Teacher Mrs. Becky Crowther provided a presentation on “NCPS Efforts to Combat Litter in Northumberland.” Mrs. McCranie stated, “We educate our young people by getting them out into Nature to appreciate the outdoors and learn to take care of the world.” Some programs that were highlighted included: BETA & JrBETA students Highway Clean Up, NAPS Annual Creek Clean Up, NMS Canoe Field Trip, Shoreline Trash Collection, and 6th grade Boat Trip. Mrs. Crowther informed the Board that programs on Conservation, where students learn about waste and pollution,

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focus on renewable energy and to Reduce - Reuse - Recycle. Anne Sackleford, NHS Senior, told about items such as tires, plastic bottles and ropes that were collected during the Shoreline Trash Collection and Kayak Cleanup. James Baker participated in the Pre Clean up and Road Cleanup finding an old TV, car engine, tires, batteries, a painting, a bed and an abandoned trailer. He enjoyed the idea that he was “giving back” to his environment. Luke Sisk participated in the Pre Clean Up and enjoyed finding a yellow raft, metal, and fireworks. Camdin Sisk has been participating for 6-8 years with the clean-up projects and it has helped with the Governor’s School Science. She said, “It is a great way to help the environment.” Mrs. McCranie told the Board that student Channing Reynolds has also initiated her own clean up project to clean up her home road. [Click here](#) for Mrs. McCranie’s presentation.

Open Public Comments

Mrs. Shelby Brooks, NCEA Representative, spoke to the Board about the School Board Health Insurance premiums being greater than the yearly salary increase, “causing a moot salary increase or a salary decrease.” NCEA is requesting that the school system cover any increase in insurance coverage that school personnel will incur and that the increase does not negate the salary/cost of living increase and any step increase. [Click here](#) for the entire statement.

Ms. Jennifer Downing, parent of 5th & 7th grade students, spoke to the Board about the emotional struggles students have going back to school. COVID has affected her children. Ms. Downing relayed information that traumatic events, such as Katrina and the pandemic, have increased anxiety in young children as they cannot sort through their emotions. Ms. Downing offered that she will submit a package of tools and other helpful information to the Board for their review.

Superintendent’s Report

Dr. Holly Wargo announced the “Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) recognizes the board members for their dedication, time and hard work in improving boardmanship skills through VSBA meetings, conferendes, board development and training, and active involvement in the association.” VSBA Academy Awards are based on participation from July 1 to June 30 of each year. Board members received the following awards: **Mrs. Betty Christopher, Award of Achievement; Mrs. Dana O’Bier, Award of Achievement; Mrs. Gayle Sterrett, Award of Achievement, Dr. Holly Wargo, Award of Achievement and Ms. Donna Booth, Award of Achievement.** Each award member received a certificate and bronze pin.

Dr. Holly Wargo provided a [School Operations Update](#).

Dr. Wargo announced that **the week of November 8-12, 2021 is National School Psychology Week** (NSPW) and **recognized NCPS School Psychologist Amanda Schimmoller.** The acronym GEAR

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(Grow, Engage, Advocate, and Rise) is this year's theme. NASP states that "Let's Get in GEAR," challenges **growth** personally and professionally, **engage** in best practices, **advocate** for children's access to mental health, and **rise** with resilience despite the challenges of the past.

School Instructional Reports

NES Principal Mrs. Martha Williams announced that Nocturnal Night is November 11, 2021. Bring a flashlight! For NES full report [Click here.](#)

NMS Principal Mr. Patrick Simmons informed the Board that 283 students are enrolled at NMS. Middle school basketball will begin November 15, 2021 and SOL testing window is December 13, 2020 to January 21, 2022. For NMS full report [Click here.](#)

NHS Principal Dr. Travis Burns announced that the next **NHS football game** is scheduled at 7 PM, Friday, November 12, 2021, away at W & L; **Cross Country** participates in State Tournament in Salem, Virginia on Saturday, November 13, 2021; and **winter sports practices** began November 8, 2021. Dr. Burns congratulated **2022 Indian of the Year Grant Biddlecomb!** For NHS full report [Click here.](#)

Director Reports

Mr. Adam Letizia, Director of Instruction & Student Services, reported on current staff vacancies, attendance, school calendar update, COVID drive-thru events and provided an Accreditation Update from Virginia Department of Education. For Mr. Letizia's full report [Click here.](#)

Dr. Jamie Sears, Director of Special Education & Student Services, reported on professional development for all teachers to begin after the Fall break with a focus on social-emotional learning. The second phase of the DESSA screening process has begun, and upcoming dates of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meetings were noted. For Dr. Sears' full report [Click here.](#)

Mrs. Javornda Ashton, Director of Educational Technology, updated the board about Cyber Safety, new technology options for teachers, and the successful test of the app TestNav. Mrs. Ashton also informed the Board that the application deadline for Virtual Virginia Spring Applications is December 1, 2021. For Mrs. Ashton's full report [Click here.](#)

Mrs. Sophronia Smith, Director of Federal Programs & School Improvement, updated the Board on the status of the HVAC grant, Virginia Preschool grant, and American Rescue Plan Homeless grant. Mrs. Smith also announced that November is Family Engagement in Education month. For Mrs. Smith's full report [Click here.](#)

Mrs. Virginia Booth, Director of Data, Accountability & Testing, updated the Board with an update on SOL non-writing testing, State and Federal data collection reports, ACCESS for ELs, and

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PowerSchool online forms. For Mrs. Booth's full report [Click here](#).

Mr. Jason Bellows, Director of Finance, reported on the E Process of HR forms and RDA purchase order requisitions, JROTC/Athletic Complex RFP process, and the 2022-2023 Budget. Mr. Bellows also reported that the 2022-2023 Budget Survey is posted on the website for community, faculty, staff and student input. For Mr. Bellows' full report [Click here](#).

Mr. Jeff Brann, Director of Operations, Maintenance, & Facilities, provided the Board with several on-going projects: lighting upgrades, athletic field maintenance, and NES maintenance upgrades. For Mr. Brann's full report [Click here](#).

Mrs. Stacy Branem, Director of Transportation, in her report expressed the department's deep sadness on the loss of **Mr. Jamie Newsome, Mechanic**. Mrs. Branem provided the Board with other current highlights and updates. For Mrs. Branem's full report [Click here](#).

Mrs. Saunee Hamlett, Director of School Nutrition, updated the Board on School Nutrition Certifications for the department, NES freezer installation, and October Harvest of the Month contest. For Mrs. Hamlett's full report [Click here](#).

Board Comments

Mrs. Dana O'Bier updated the Board on the events/happenings at Northern Neck Technical Center. All students participated on October 22, 2021, in Service Day at the Center. Some of the class events included: Nurse Aide class packed care packages for Ronald McDonald House; Cosmetology class provided hair styling; Culinary Arts students provided lunch to The Haven; Auto Body class held a car wash; Marine class held a cleanup at Wheelan Marine; Carpentry class built and donated eight tables and six benches to the Wildlife Refuge; and the Electrical class helped in installing new wiring at a Westmoreland school.

Earlier in the meeting, Mrs. O'Bier commended Dr. Travis Burns and his staff for successful Homecoming activities when other areas schools did not have activities or cancelled activities. "Thank you for keeping students first!"