

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORM RESPONSES
 Thursday, January 13, 2022

Timestamp	First Name:	Last Name:	Magisterial District:	Your written comments for the January 13 monthly meeting:
Dec. 17, 21 -- 2:11: PM	Clarissa	Thompson	Varina District - Alicia S. Atkins	Exactly what is being done to combat the negative presence of social media in the schools? Students are allowed to stir the pot and cause chaos and confusion, but have no consequences. One student in particular cries wolf and then stirs the pot even more. She continues to remain at school. THE BAD STUDENTS ARE MAKING IT HARD FOR THE GOOD ONES. There are so many children being put on social media without permission. Students are going live in the classrooms, locker rooms etc. Not to mention a graphic incident that happened at Elko in the restroom that is considered child pornography and maybe rape. It was being shared amongst children. There are kids showing up to Elko with drugs and weapons. Kids are smoking weed on buses and are allowed to continue riding the bus. At the end of one school day, a group of teenagers that didn't attend Elko wandered onto campus and were standing in the bus ramp at dismissal. The dress code isn't being enforced. A student was hit and when he hit the student back, and he still received RESET. There have been so many fights and disrespect amongst the students. Students continue to curse out teachers, other students and bus drivers. At some point and time suspension has to be an option. Maybe even expulsion. Keeping the students at school isn't always an option. Parents need to start being held accountable for their child or children's habitual behavior. What is the county going to do about this problem? Because it is a HUGE problem. Every child deserves to be safe at school. If something isn't done, I will go to the media about this.
Jan. 3, 22 -- 1:49: PM	Susan	Brown	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	Knowing of the high level of community transmission of COVID-19 as of January 3, 2022, and of the low level of student ages 5-12 vaccinations, and the low level of booster vaccines for eligible adults and teens, I hope the HCPS board will recommend a brief return to virtual instruction to protect our vulnerable students, faculty, school staff, and their families from Covid-19. The risks of long term post-acute covid damage to multi-organs including the heart, brain, lungs, and kidneys, are 10-30% even for mild, asymptomatic cases. (Dr. Fauci confirmed this on t.v. this weekend. There is extensive data available online.) To expose our children to this is to risk a future of many disabled adults. A brief virtual learning period will enable more children to be vaccinated, more boosters to be administered, and alleviate stress on our health care system.
Jan. 5, 22 -- 10:08: AM	Mona	Jain	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	It is my understanding that Virginia public schools now have the option to provide virtual education during closures due to inclement weather. There have been a number of instances, such as the week of January 3rd, where it would have been preferable for the students to have had virtual classes. I understand the desire for kids to play outside during snow days, but beyond one day it is important that kids are able to continue their education with little disruption.

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Jan. 6, 22 -- 10:59: PM	Maxwell	Simpson	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	I am a senior in highschool in Henrico. My classmates and I have noticed that our school seems to intentionally fail at contact tracing to not send students home. I think more oversight need be applied to the contact tracing. If this is not possible school should almost certainly be online because the lives of Henrico families and students are being put at risk in order to keep students in person. This is reckless the consequences could not be more clear with rising case numbers. Thank you for your time.
Jan. 7, 22 -- 6:03: PM	Eureka	P.W.	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	I am concerned that with the teacher shortage and other issues arising. Why are Instructional assistants not paid when they have to cover. class? Teachers are given \$100 if they cover a class but Instructional assistants are given nothing. I know a raise for recently given but how is this fair. Also last school year teachers were paid for teaching both virtual and in class students but Instructional assistants were not even considered. Instructional assistants are at times treated like second class people. Many of the IAs have to work second jobs just to pay the bills. Or apply for food stamps to eat. This system needs an update asap. Thank you for your time
Jan. 7, 22 -- 6:40: PM	Tabatha	Williams	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	How can we put collective bargaining on the table so teachers have a voice?
Jan. 10, 22 -- 2:00: AM	Aryan	Baweja	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn, Twin Hickory	I would like to address concerns for Covid-19, as a student I've noticed that quite a few students have been out due to Covid-19, The students in my school (Deep Run High School) do not/ rarely follow Covid-19 guidelines. At lunch we sit together, no social distancing, and no masks- they also do not scan the contact tracing bar codes on each table. The faculty does not do much to enforce certain things related to Covid. I would like to strongly encourage moving to virtual schooling for the rest of the school year. Inorder to ensure the safety both students and faculty.
Jan. 10, 22 -- 8:11: AM	Lucinda	Jones	don't know	I am a board substitute and I can't feed my family and keep my rent paid. I have not missed one day out of school. Henrico County has a teaching shortage and they have relied heavily on board substitutes to teach. It is so unfair to have so many open board sub positions without making sure the people who are keeping you all afloat not have full healthcare benefits, paid holidays and snow days. What if all of the board substitutes walked off the job and protested for healthcare benefits! Paid holidays! Snow Days! What would you do? Treat us like human beings! Do you all have full healthcare? How does it feel? Do you all have life insurance, dental? How so unfair is that ? Board Subs deserve more than what we have not gotten. Please change the policy! I am begging the board to change the policy so that board substitutes who at least have a license are able to take care of our families. I will only get paid for two days this week because of the Christmas winter break. How can I pay my bills? Yet, I show up to teach every single day with a smile on my face and motivation . If you don't take care of the people who takes care of you then all teachers will move on to something else that is not related to education.

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Jan. 10, 22 -- 9:01: AM	Lisa	Nelson	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	Omicron variant, according to the CDC is 95% of Covid cases. The vaccines and boosters available today do not stop transmission of the variant. Kids who are vaccinated should not continue to go to school when they are a close contact. They are just as likely to be carriers of the virus than their unvaccinated friends. This is an unequitable policy. Please consider no quarantines. This is my child's 3rd quarantine and she has never had Covid. With Christmas break, the snow and now a full week of quarantine, she has/will be missing an enormous amount of school. Not to mention, there is no guarantee that she will not miss school more.
Jan. 10, 22 -- 9:37: AM	Lisa	Babilon	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	I'm Lisa Babilon, and I have a middle schooler and high schooler in HCPS. There is a bill being considered at the State level to establish May 27 as "Student-Athletic Mental Health Awareness Day". We know that this group can experience intense stressors and challenges, along with the great personal and emotional rewards that can come as well. Studies are referenced in the full brief of the bill that demonstrate the increased risk of depression, anxiety and suicide in this population. I would like HCPS to express support for this bill. As a parent and mental health nurse, I recognize the importance of any intervention, such as a bill like this, to increase mental health awareness and decrease stigma. Our youth in particular, have experienced a dramatic increase in mental health needs due to the pandemic. As teachers and role models for our youth, I believe schools have a responsibility to support these efforts as well.

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Jan. 10, 22 -- 2:38: PM	Nicole	Nielsen	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>As a teacher I has so many questions. Firstly if you cannot have, an in person public forum, Why are we still in person teaching? Secondly, where are the kn or n 95 masks for staff and students? Thirdly, there is too much misinformation floating around. Staff are being told that they can come in if they test positive but are asymptomatic! This makes no sense what so ever. There are still so many students that are not vaccinated, and many staff members that are not following mask protocols because they are vaccinated! This is not ok. I tried to apply to the virtual academy to protect my partner and my child that cannot be vaccinated. I got the run around. I was told I needed to get an accommodation. Which was denied and they told me I needed to apply to the virtual academy which I had already done. HR does not seem to communicate with one another. I can tell you as an employee of Henrico this may be my last year in this district. I feel disrespected on so many levels. From the school board itself, to the Special education administration and department, to my Administrators, to my own lead teacher. Everyone is just looking out for themselves. They do not seem to care about the people around them. I have been pulled from my position to cover a completely different job in my building. Despite the fact that there are full time substitutes available to cover this position. I am feeling abused and used up. We are not a team here and I refuse to be treated this way. It has become increasingly clear that Henrico does not care about it's staff anymore. I don't want a pizza party, I want support in the form of more aides, leaders that lead and don't just sit in their offices' making rules up for the rest of us. Stop giving raises to the people at the top! They make more than enough, we need it down here. Amy Cashwell made a raise that is the same amount as what our FULL-TIME aides make in a YEAR! This is crazy! Yes I am ranting, yes this may be too much. But I have kept quiet for too long. You all waste money on things we don't need. You aren't asking the people that are in the trenches, what we need. I will end up getting in trouble with my admin but at this point I don't care anymore.</p>
Jan. 11, 22 -- 8:46: AM	Cassie	Wolfe	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>As with any new state level official changing parties, a lot of change happens quickly. The new governor has said he will still follow through on his pre-Omicron promise to remove the state-wide school mask mandate. To say this is an area of high anxiety for many parents is an understatement. Does the school board plan to follow their mask mandate through the end of the school year, or is there a plan to revisit the policy? Please be transparent in your thoughts. We are exhausted and need one less future anxiety. Thank you.</p>
Jan. 11, 22 -- 2:53: PM	Stacy	Waller	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	<p>Are y'all considering going back virtual? With cases rising every day I'm worried about my son at school. He does work better in the classroom setting, but this virus has me worried.</p>

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Jan. 11, 22 -- 8:33: PM	Terri	Starr	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	Hello and thank you for taking my comment. I would like to know if we can please allow for students who are out sick/required to quarantine to somehow participate in class through zoom or teleconference. Why can't the teachers just allow them to dial in somehow so they don't miss so much lesson time, and can still at least observe lectures etc? As of now they just get a list of assignments and struggle to complete them. Thanks!
Jan. 11, 22 -- 10:59: PM	Jennifer	Harrell	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	The incoming governor has expressed his intention to do away w/ the statewide mask mandate in schools. Please keep the mask mandate for Henrico County Schools. It is critical to help prevent the spread of this virus. The teachers and staff need PPE and cleaning supplies. I've been hearing that alcohol wipes are no longer provided. Please do something to ensure the schools have the proper cleaning supplies and masks. Teachers need the N95 or KN95 masks to protect them and the students. While the pictures on social media make it look like everyone has them, the teachers I've talked to haven't see them at all. Please require testing to return to school after a positive covid diagnosis.
Jan. 12, 22 -- 5:59: AM	Dominica	Campbell	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	I am very concerned about the safety of the students and staff during the current, unprecedented surge in positive COVID cases as well as for the rest of this school year. I am strongly in favor of HCPS taking the following steps: maintaining a mask mandate for the rest of the school year; going virtual for the next two weeks to enable uninterrupted, quality instruction by teachers; providing ADEQUATE amounts of PPE and sanitizing supplies to all schools and staff; providing paid leave to teachers & staff who have COVID regardless of where/when they got it; requiring quarantine of 5 days for anyone who tests positive or has symptoms, regardless of vaccination status; funding for hiring of qualified subs on emergency basis; and mandating a COVID vaccine for school attendance in 2022-2023.
Jan. 12, 22 -- 7:59: AM	Vickie	Crumpton	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	The new Governor talks of not mandating mask being worn in public schools leaving it to the parents to decide if their child wears a mask or not. I feel we will have more cases of Onicron if masks are not mandatory. Please keep the mask wearing mandate for this school year. We are already understaffed because of faculty members who have Omicron.
Jan. 12, 22 -- 8:51: AM	Alison	Meehan	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	We should implement a test to stay option for students and staff who are not fully vaccinated and exposed to covid at school. Students who are exposed at school should not have to wait an additional 3 days after testing negative on day 5 from exposure to come back to school. The test to stay program would keep students in the classroom and keep teachers and staff who work for Henrico from having to take time off to stay at home with a perfectly healthy child. Richmond City has a test to stay program (as recommended by the CDC) and we should have one as well so students can stay at school and learn.

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Jan. 12, 22 -- 9:15: AM	Christine	Coffey	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella, Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>First, I want to send well wishes to Ms. Shea and prayers her treatment is successful. I'd also like to address the current Covid protocols and hope the board will consider strongly backing more proactive improvements to ensure our teachers, staff, and students stay healthy and safe. 1) Regardless of statewide mask mandates, we need to ensure Henrico County continues a required mask mandate until we are a lower risk level. As counties that do not have required masking are going virtual and we've been able to stay open, it's apparent this measure works as we hopefully move towards a lower community spread and look to a future with no masks. 2) Quarantining guidelines need to evolve quicker (both to be more and less stringent as community spread gets worse and better). Currently if you are vaccinated and exposed you do not have to quarantine. This is counterintuitive to helping curb spread. As an example, a fellow parent was diagnosed with Covid on Day 0. His vaccinated son got to go to school the next day. His vaccinated son started showing symptoms day 2. So he had 2 days to spread Covid in school. Exposed vaccinated kids should have a 2 or 3 day quarantine, while unvaccinated kids should keep their 10 day quarantine. Once Omicron lessens, it should be reassessed again to hopefully go back to vaccinated kids not needing to quarantine. 3) Lunch is still a huge problem and spreader in schools. Please give more resources to schools and please, check in with schools and help those who can not distance kids. Our elementary school still sits kids right next to each other at lunch, which is much more dangerous during Omicron. 4) Use Covid funds given to Henrico County for Covid mitigation. It's disappointing to say the least see funds going towards Capitol projects instead of masks, cleaning supplies, and testing. It says to me the board is not developing the regular budget responsibly when they have to steal from the pot given to them for Covid measures. Develop an opt in Covid weekly testing program for schools, ensure supplies are plentiful first, pay higher salaries for substitutes, hold vaccination events in all schools. Show us you are better leaders than we are seeing and that you are using your elected power to ensure improvement in our community. Thank you for your time.</p>
Jan. 12, 22 -- 9:53: AM	Kerrie	Distanlo	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn, Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I would like to request a virtual option for quarantined students. The kids should be given a way to at least watch the lessons in class. I feel it is unacceptable for them to miss out on live instruction when we have the technology in place to allow them to watch. The stress of missing multiple days of school is significant for students. It also puts extra work on the teachers who have to spend time catching them up on missed lessons. In addition, I feel that sols should be canceled this year. We should not add that extra stress on teachers and students when they are still struggling to make up for lost learning. The kids and teachers need time to catch up and teach/learn the fundamentals.</p>

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Jan. 12, 22 -- 10:04: AM	Rebecca	Chipman	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	Greetings School Board, I am writing you today to implore you to increase mitigation and safety practices in Henrico County Public Schools. I am asking you to please provide KN95 masks to ALL students and faculty. I am asking you to please keep in place the mandatory mask policy. I am asking you to please provide weekly Covid testing for ALL students and faculty. The new CDC guidance for schools says all students and staff in communities with high transmission (98% of US counties right now) should be tested weekly for Covid regardless of vaccine status. These mitigation strategies will help us keep schools open. I also ask you to please consider establishing metrics to use in order to determine when schools need to move to virtual learning based on high levels of transmission and staff and student absenteeism. Thank you, Rebecca Chipman
Jan. 12, 22 -- 11:47: AM	Meagan	McGee	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	I am a teacher with HCPS and I'm asking the board to figure out something in response to the major substitute shortage. Teachers and staff members have a mountain of responsibilities already, and adding class coverage to that list is just making it worse. I know that most schools have at least one permanent sub this year- but that doesn't matter much when there are 10+ absences. Many jobs are not 'required' to have substitutes (like IAs or Sped teachers), but this is leaving us without the support we're supposed to have for students with IEPs or 504s. I request that the board figures out some way to get substitutes- raise how much they're paid, give incentives, etc. Maybe even start recruiting parents of students or something. It is not fair to the students to fall behind on direct instruction because of a lack of resources within the county.

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Jan. 12, 22 -- 12:26: PM	Ellen	Terry	Hanover County	<p>Greetings, I understand the overall teacher concern with the shortage of qualified substitutes to cover the large volume of classes affected by our current staff shortages and it is extremely concerning. Resources are being pulled from other areas within schools, as well as stretching overwhelmed teachers and staff thin. This is not sustainable and deeply affects the quality of education, of which HCPS takes pride in providing. While this is appreciated and noble, Central Office staff, administrators, and school resource teachers are not qualified to be short-term or long-term solutions to the substitute problem. The impact is heavy on students missing quality resource time due to canceled classes. I want to specifically point out that staff shortages are not only affecting direct service in the classroom negatively but also school-wide services in the student support and wellness arena. Staff morale is low. While teachers are rightly paid to cover classes, school counselors are required to cover for absences within school based mental health services and not being compensated. Moreover, we are unable to fulfill the roles of registrar, admin assistant, and absent counselors, social workers, and school psychologists and still fulfill our responsibilities. Our kids need us in the mental health arena more than ever and with our covering for absent SBMH faculty, multiple clerical responsibilities, and moved up timelines, we are barely staying afloat and working unpaid overtime. We need support to address our students academic and socio-emotional needs and to support our teachers. A temporary virtual option would help in regards to staff shortages and student absences. Students who are anxious about coming or sick may willingly log in virtually. Many teachers and school based mental health faculty are quarantined, but may also be able to support students virtually. Administration covering for nurses is also taking away from the needs of our community, faculty, and students. In addition to the obvious need for more custodial staff, we need sanitizing wipes and Lysol provided consistently. We are all overwhelmed and trying to remain positive. Please consider these needs as we are preparing for future variants and surges that inevitably will come by addressing these concerns in future policy and decisions. Respectfully, Mrs. Terry</p>
Jan. 12, 22 -- 1:22: PM	Colleen	Bohlman	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>It is possible that the new administration will eliminate mask mandates. Please make an official statement confirming a continued county-wide mask mandate, in alignment with CDC guidelines. Focus on getting our staff/administration the quality/amount of PPE promised. Schools are not receiving what they need to keep teachers/administration safe. Please RECONSIDER the use of at home Covid Tests to allow student or staff member to re-enter our learning environment after testing positive or being directly exposed to Covid-19. At home antigen tests have a 20% instance of false negative results and many people cannot get or afford them.</p>

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Jan. 12, 22 -- 4:27: PM	Kayla	Johnson	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	<p>Why are teachers being forced to switch student for intervention reading groups? We were told it was a county decision and we are required to do so. We are plenty capable, and have been, facilitating this on our own. Teachers don't have desk shields at guided reading tables therefore the students are to close. If someone has COVID, they are now contaminating more that one classroom and more than one teacher. This is an unnecessary health risk for students and teachers. Teachers nor parents have been asked how they feel about switching to different class at an elementary level, and many do not feel comfortable as our COVID numbers are higher now than they have been all school year. How can we address this in the buildings and have it stopped? It will not academically impact any students in a negative way, but has the potential to impact many students, teachers, and families in a negative way with more exposures and time away from school. Please help us and understand we want what's best for students academically and for their health; as well as ours.</p>
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