

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORM RESPONSES

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Timestamp	First Name:	Last Name:	Magisterial District:	Your written comments for the May 26 monthly meeting:
May. 12, 22 -- 4:52: PM	K	O	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	I understand some students wish to voice their concerns about specific topics, but using school time is not appropriate.
May. 23, 22-- 4:7: PM	Lakisha	Greenhow	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	Teacher Retention at Fairfield Middle School
May. 23, 22-- 6:40: PM	Ashley	Carroll	Varina District - Alicia S. Atkins	<p>Virginia ranks as one of the highest performing states for education in the country, yet it is one of the worst in pay for educators. A 2021 study by business.org states, "Washington, D.C and Virginia rank last on our list, with teachers earning 17% less than the average wage, respectively," as well as being one of seven states that pay their teachers below the state's average salary. Decades of expectations without compensation have produced teachers and staff debilitated with crippling burnout, to the point where education is in peril. While counties may feel they are addressing problems, their solutions are not viable to a living wage, especially in today's world. * Fix the step system to equate to years, as well as have the pay align with varying educational degrees. New teachers should NOT be paid more than veteran teachers. Years of employment should equate with pay. Teachers will leave if they are not compensated accordingly. * Make the pay scale transparent for all employees; the lack of transparency has created confusion and has demoralized staff. * A 10% raise to balance the cost of living. Staff are feeling the effects of changes in our economy and many are struggling to make ends meet with an increase in financial burdens. * A bonus for returning staff that is comparable with surrounding counties. Our bonus is much lower than other localities, and we are losing valuable staff to these localities. Fair wages for our part time staff and Instructional Assistants. They are grossly underpaid and under appreciated. * ELEMENTARY TEACHERS SHOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR THEIR MISSED PLANNINGS. I have missed 12 since December.</p>

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Timestamp	First Name:	Last Name:	Magisterial District:	Your written comments for the May 26 monthly meeting:
May. 25, 22-- 8:1: AM	Laura	Raetz	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I am writing to express my sincere concern for the lack of communication employees receive from the HCPS Human Resources office. I moved to Henrico County with my family in July 2021. I was hired as an Ex. Ed. Teacher. I was 7 months pregnant when the 21-22 school year began. I filed my short-term disability claim with MetLife on 8/18. To the best of my knowledge, I was planning to receive at least 6 weeks of short-term disability benefits as a full time employee of HCPS. In September, I received notice I would not receive full FMLA benefits. Part of me wanted to go out on maternity leave and not return to the classroom. The lack of fair pay and benefits was too much. However, I chose to return to work after 9 weeks. I gave birth to my daughter Savannah on 10/15. I waited weeks to receive my short term disability payment. On 12/8, a week before I was due back to work, I received a call from MetLife saying my claim was denied. Why? I spent hours of my time making phone calls to MetLife and HCPS HR to get a better understanding, only to be forwarded from one representative to the next. Finally, I was told my pregnancy was considered a “pre-existing condition.” This is disgusting. Members of the Henrico community shake their head when I share this. I returned to work on 12/17, 8 weeks post-partum. Emotions from this HR experience contributing to what would be diagnosed as post-partum depression on 12/30, for which I am still taking medication. Henrico County claims to support mental health, but these policies suggest otherwise. After the new year, my children and I got sick. My paycheck statements began noting “dock pay.” Why? Again, I spent hours of my own time, tracking down someone who could explain. I was told in March, all of my sick time was used during my maternity leave because I did not qualify for short term disability. This nightmare of my “pre-existing condition” continued! Why wasn’t this critical information communicated? How can you expect a full-time working mother with a newborn, to go from January to June without a single minute of sick leave? It is no surprise that teachers are leaving the field in vast numbers. The lack of communication from central office to employees is concerning. I urge you to see how other districts inform their employees of these leave policies. Do not leave it up to your employees to ask these questions ahead of time. Make the information available. Be transparent with what will happen. We deserve to know.</p>

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May. 25, 22 -- 10:19: AM	Sarah	A	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn, Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>Hello school board members. I am coming to you to advocate for parents rights. Parents are their child's first and toughest supporters and Defenders. Please do not restrict school board meeting comments to one person per household every parent should have a right to advocate for their child as well as grandparents and community members. If you are going to have public comments you should allow anyone who wants to speak on behalf of a child. This should also be done in the three-minute time. So that parents have enough time to address issues that are going on. Your schools are not always addressing issues. My son was hit unprovoked and nothing was done just a few weeks ago and it took me two weeks to finally get an administrator to follow up and take care of the situation. This was after multiple emails and phone calls to the school. Parents must be allowed to advocate for their children. No student should be hit by another child and nothing is done. Fortunately for me my school principal did stand up and do the right thing. I have also had multiple teachers this year that just have ignored me when I have emailed asking about problems with my children's assignments Etc. Ive had to go to my amazing school counselor numerous times. Teachers are not always grading things in a timely manner and these kids need their parents to be able to advocate for them if the teachers and staff are unable to do their jobs. In light of the recent school violence we need to step up and do the right thing for our kids and allow parents to be involved. Taking away parents rights to speak out at school meetings when issues arise is not the way to accomplish protecting our children. Please do not pass the suggested changes to policies for parents speaking out for their kids.</p>

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May. 25, 22 -- 10:20: AM	J	B	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I am writing in reference to the proposed policy changes to P2-05-004, Citizen Participation, and P4-11, Political Activities. One proposed change to P2-05-004 states, "No signs, posters, placards, banners or like objects shall be permitted in the School Board's meeting room during any School Board public meeting, public hearing or town hall." This is a clear violation of First Amendment rights to freedom of speech. All stakeholders have the right to peaceably hold a sign, poster, etc. during a public meeting so long as sign is void of profanities and obscenities. The School Board is comprised of elected officials, and these are public meetings in which citizens and stakeholders have the right to express their concerns with policies and actions taken by Henrico County Public Schools. The proposed changes to P2-05-004 should remove this sentence and any other conflicts with our Constitutional rights. The proposed changes to P4-11 allow the politization of the classroom based on a teacher's political viewpoints. "This policy shall not be construed to prohibit the discussion or use of curriculum-based political or issue-oriented materials as part of classroom discussions or projects or to prohibit the delivery of informational materials. Employees and teachers may use political materials as part of their curriculum as long as no political candidate or party is treated more, or less, favorably than any other candidate or party." Not only is there no mechanism to prevent the abuse of such policy, there is absolutely no educational reason for political materials to be used in the classroom. Government and civics classes should teach the different political systems and the rights citizens have within each system; NOT POLITICAL ISSUES. The proposed changes to this policy will simply create more tension and division between HCPS staff and parents. This change should be removed from the proposed updates.</p>