

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING
March 8, 2024

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special joint meeting with the Henrico County School Board at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, March 8, 2024, Libbie Mill Library, 2100 Libbie Lake East Street, Henrico, VA 23230.

Members of the Board Present:

Tyrone E. Nelson, Chairman, Varina District
Daniel J. Schmitt, Vice-Chairman, Brookland District
Roscoe D. Cooper, III, Fairfield District
Misty D. Whitehead, Three Chopt District
Jody K. Rogish, Tuckahoe District

Members of the School Board Present:

Alicia S. Atkins, Chair, Varina District
Kristi B. Kinsella, Brookland District
Ryan E. Young, Fairfield District

Other Officials Present:

John A. Vithoukas, County Manager
Amy E. Cashwell, Superintendent of Schools
Andrew R. Newby, County Attorney
Tanya N. Brackett, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board
Tiffany Burton, Clerk of the School Board
Michael Y. Feinmel, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Administration
Monica Smith-Callahan, Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs
Cari M. Tretina, Deputy County Manager/Chief of Staff
Steven J. Yob, Deputy County Manager for Community Operations
Ben A. Sheppard, Director of Public Relations
Eileen Cox, Chief of Communications, Schools
Lesley Hughes, Chief of Learning Officer, Schools
John Wack, Chief Financial Officer, Schools
Elizabeth Parker, Director of Student Support and Wellness, Schools

Ben Sheppard, Director of Public Relations, welcomed everyone and recognized Tyrone E. Nelson, Chairman of the Henrico County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Nelson thanked everyone for coming. He noted the importance of mental health, especially among the youth. The County recognized a need to modernize youth mental health services with the help of the Henrico Youth Violence Prevention Committee that was formed in late 2021. Mr. Nelson stated youth mental health requires involvement from everyone, and he is grateful for the support of the County Manager, Board of Supervisors, School Board, and Superintendent Cashwell and her team for working together to ensure young people and their families will have the mental health support

they need with the new Henrico CARES initiative. At this point in the presentation, he recognized Alicia Atkins, Chair of the Henrico County School Board.

Mrs. Atkins thanked Mr. Nelson and recognized her colleagues on the School Board. She stated that suicide is the second leading cause of death for children in Virginia between the ages of 10 and 14, sharing statistics around the number of children and youth in the United States grappling with mental illness and the percentage of those receiving no treatment. Mrs. Atkins recognized Daniel Rigsby, Assistant Director for Clinical Services for Mental Health & Developmental Services (MHDS).

Mr. Rigsby noted Virginia currently ranks 48th in the nation in access to youth for mental health care, with 38.2% of the state youth reported having felt sad or hopeless. Currently, MHDS has seen a 30% increase in youth requesting same day access to service, with 20% younger than the age of 10. Mr. Rigsby stated the goal of Henrico CARES is to create a community in which everyone can thrive. In order to do this, we must deliver a comprehensive system of care that puts information and services where needed. Mr. Rigsby shared that the heart of Henrico CARES is the steering committee which is comprised of a diverse group of dedicated professionals, and he extended his gratitude and recognized each member of the steering committee. Mr. Rigsby then recognized Liz Parker, Director of Student Support and Wellness with Henrico County Public Schools.

Mrs. Parker shared the core elements of the Henrico CARES plan and highlighted the goals and action steps driving the evolution of youth mental health care services in Henrico County. Henrico CARES would include:

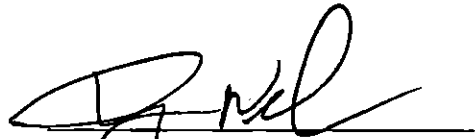
- A partnership with community and private mental health care providers to offer mental health care and services at schools;
- An increase of HCPS school-based mental health providers;
- No-cost, short-term mental health teletherapy that middle and high school students can access at home or school;
- Support for qualifying HCPS staff to work toward licensure as professional counselors or clinical social workers;
- Increased clinical staffing to expand access to parent-child interaction therapy;
- Increased early and intensive interventions for mental health, substance use, and youth violence;
- Expanded curriculum and training to strengthen mental health literacy among students, staff, parents, and caregivers;
- A screening program for early identification of students who may need additional social, emotional, and mental health care support;
- Enhanced coordination and information-sharing among school-based staff and private or community providers;
- A virtual mental health care coordination service that offers a federal- and state-compliant referral system; 24/7 access to a live, multilingual care coordinator, and a self-service tool to find verified providers; and
- No-cost treatment and support for students who are without an existing mental health care provider and have been discharged from an inpatient or residential treatment program.

Mrs. Parker recognized Kenya Grooms, a junior at Varina High School, who wanted to share her story and the importance of having the support of mental health resource for students.

Kenya Grooms thanked Henrico County Public Schools and the Board of Supervisors. She shared her challenges as a student with anxiety taking SOL exams and trying to maintain good grades in the face of the threat of gun violence on a daily basis within the school system. All these factors contribute to mental health challenges for teens, but, with the help of school counselors and mental health counselors, she and other students have been able to work through the challenges throughout the school year. Kenya thanked her counselor who was present and thanked Henrico for creating a program to continue focus on youth and their mental health challenges.

Mr. Sheppard thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.



Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Henrico County, Virginia