



Fayette County Board of Education February 22, 2021

As part of our commitment to providing timely, clear, and accurate information to students, staff, families, and community members, we are please to provide a recap of our monthly school board meetings.

WELCOME & PUBLIC COMMENT

Board Chair Tyler Murphy welcomed those members of the public watching the school board meeting online.

During the portion of the meeting for remarks by citizens, Murphy explained that the board has instituted a process to allow members of the public to sign up to speak in advance of regular school board meetings similar to that used by the Lexington Fayette Urban County Council. Details on that process are available at <http://www.fcps.net/PublicComment>.

Murphy said that although no one signed up to speak, two members of the public submitted written comments about the return to in-person learning. Their full submissions will be shared with the board members and included in the board meeting record.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT



Acting Superintendent Marlene Helm began her report with a [video produced by some of the scholars at Carter G. Woodson Academy](#) in celebration of Black History Month.

She then recapped the joy experienced on Monday, Feb. 22, by kindergarten, first and second grade students, teachers, staff and families on the first day back to in-person learning.

"Some of the words we heard today were happy, excited, over the moon, thrilled, delighted, absolutely fantastic, wonderful, and that was just from the principals," Helm said, praising the families, students and employees for not only making the day a great one, but also for all they have done over the past 11 months while schools were closed.

Chief Operating Officer Myron Thompson then gave an update on the district's transportation department, including efforts going back to 2017 to address the bus driver shortage. Among the highlights of his report:

- More than 86% of school districts across the nation are facing a school bus driver shortage.
- FCPS has offered incentive pay to boost attendance, raised driver pay from \$14.20 to \$17.76, worked with a local staffing agency to find candidates, and contracted with an advertising agency to run a bus driver recruitment campaign that included billboards, yard signs, banners, social media, television commercials, and targeted

email campaigns.

- The district has explored the possibility of outsourcing, attempted to partner with LexTran, and approached charter bus companies about contracting services, without success.
- The fall of 2019 was the first time in decades the district was fully staffed in transportation. Since then the department has experienced significant attrition.
- Applications are down 75% because of unemployment incentives and COVID-19 concerns.

Thompson explained that although leaders have been closely monitoring staff levels, as the return to in-person learning grew closer, several employees left the district or went on leave.

Until the buses actually rolled on the first day back, leaders were hesitant to definitively state how many routes could be covered. Given the success of the first day, Thompson said FCPS has enough drivers to cover the daily routes for the all preschool and elementary school students, as well as those who attend the 12 large middle schools and six large high schools, which account for 95% of students in the district.

The challenge now is how to support transportation for the district's middle and high school programs, including the three technical centers, Carter G. Woodson Academy, Family Care Center, Martin Luther King Academy, Opportunity Middle College, STEAM Academy, Success Academy, The Learning Center and The Stables.

Thompson said a district team is working on creative solutions to provide transportation for the roughly 1,900 students who attend those 11 programs. Possibilities include recruiting existing staff to train as drivers, decentralizing transportation, restructuring driver positions, adjusting school start times, utilizing vans and increasing pay.

"I can't thank our transportation staff enough for being there for us in our time of need," Thompson said. "There are just some approaches that we are evaluating and continuing to monitor that we can't fully vet and operationalize until we're actually in a posture of where we're driving daily and really know the full extent of where we are."



CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Chief Operating Officer Myron Thompson shared the [February construction highlights](#), including the addition of a secure vestibule for the Carter G. Woodson Primary Academy that will open in August 2021. This will bring the total to 29 schools where secure vestibules have been added since 2019. He then reviewed progress on the new

Tates Creek High School building, where 30% of the work is complete. The new school is slated to open in August 2022.

AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS

The board voted to approve:

- A contract with Dr. Marlene Helm to serve as acting superintendent of the Fayette County Public Schools while the board seeks a permanent superintendent.
- A revision to the job description for Director of Teaching and Learning.
- Schoolwide fundraising projects at Julius Marks Elementary, Liberty Elementary and the Success Academy.
- A waiver of graduation requirements for students at risk for not finishing high school who need an additional path to earning their high school diploma.
- The addition of a summer school stipend that would pay teachers their hourly rate equivalent in an effort to incentivize the position.
- A proposal to extend emergency COVID-19 leave through June 30, 2021. This would allow employees to take up to 10 days of emergency COVID-19 leave if unable to work for the following six reasons: 1) A Federal, State, or local quarantine



or isolation order related to COVID-19. 2) They have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19. 3) They are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis. 4) They are caring for a member of the immediate family subject to or advised to quarantine as described above. 5) They are experiencing another substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor. 6) They are caring for their minor child because the child's school or daycare has been closed or child's daycare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions.

The official minutes from February 22, 2021 will be posted within the agenda of the March 8, 2021 school board work session.

SEE FOR YOURSELF

The school board's action meetings are televised live on FCPS-ETV (Spectrum Channel 197, Windstream Channel 13, and MetroNet Channel 2) starting at 6 p.m. The meetings are also replayed the same week at 8 p.m. Wednesday, 10 p.m. Saturday, and 10 p.m. Sunday and are archived through the [FCPS YouTube channel](#). Planning and action meetings are also streamed live through the district's [YouTube channel](#) and [Video on Demand service](#). If watching on the district website, please hover over the Live Streams banner at the top and click on the play button to begin on your device.

Fayette County Public Schools | fcps.net

