



School Board Meeting Recap

Thursday, July 8, 2021

There were several notable moments during last week's School Board meeting. The timestamps with each highlight will help you navigate directly to the point in the recorded meeting, which is available in the Archives section of BCPS Live (<https://bcps.live/archives/>).

1. Public Comment (Session I): *Timestamp: 5:38 - 55:43*

Mr. East made a motion, which the board approved, to add a second public comment session to the agenda to accommodate the added number of community members wishing to speak. During this first session, community members expressed their opinions and concerns regarding transgender policy. Although intended for the second public comment session, some community members also addressed Critical Race Theory and the 1619 Project.

2. Return to School Plan: *Timestamp: 57:52 - 1:03:48*

Dr. Russ recommended that the board approve a return to school plan for the 2021-22 school year in which students would attend in-person, five days a week. Following this recommendation, a brief public comment period was provided to allow several community members to express their opinions. The board approved this recommendation.

3. Updated COVID-19 Health Plan: *Timestamp: 1:03:49 - 1:06:40*

The board approved an updated health plan which has since been posted to the BCPS COVID Information site.

NOTE: Dr. Russ clarified this updated plan represents *current* recommendations and guidelines if BCPS students were to return to school now. This plan will likely need to be revisited following July 25th when many restrictions are scheduled to be lifted across the Commonwealth.

4. Superintendent Update: *Timestamp: 1:06:42 - 1:09:09*

- USDA waivers regarding the Child Nutrition Program have been extended through the end of the 2021-22 school year, meaning that *all* BCPS students will continue to receive free breakfast and lunch next year.
- Back-to-School registration forms are now available through the [ParentPortal](#). Parents are welcome to access and complete those forms now.

5. Public Comment (Session II): *Timestamp: 1:11:57 - 1:59:18*

During this second public comment session, community members expressed their opinions and concerns regarding Critical Race Theory.

5. School Board Statement: *Timestamp: 1:59:20 - 2:00:12*

“The following statement is supported by all five members of the school board. Botetourt County Public Schools has not, and will not, be teaching Critical Race Theory. The term is not mentioned in standards nor in curriculum. This includes the current standards and standards that will be taught beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. Collectively, we do not support Critical Race Theory in K-12 education in Botetourt County.”

Follow-up Comments: *Timestamp: 2:00:13 - 2:09:04*

Ms. Austin shared her efforts to connect with Delegate Terry Austin, Governor Ralph Northam, and Secretary of Education Atif Qarni. She has formally requested written responses from Governor Northam and Secretary Qarni, and will share those responses during a future public meeting.

Next School Board Meeting: Thursday, August 12, 2021

Botetourt County Public Schools

143 Poor Farm Road • Fincastle, VA • 24090 • (540)473-8263 • www.bcps.k12.va.us