



April 2, 2023

Hanover County Branch of the NAACP statement regarding Hanover County School Board granting themselves a 60% pay increase.

At the Joint Education Committee meeting held on March 28th, 2023, between the Hanover County Board of Supervisors and the School Board, it was disclosed that the School Board had added what amounts to a one time 60% pay raise for themselves. It was included in a category called "Job Family Adjustments" as part of a larger amount.

Historically, Hanover County School Board, being an Appointed Board, had a salary cap set in the Code of Virginia up until the law was changed after a multi-year effort by Republican Delegate H. Buddy Fowler at the 2022 GA Session.

The Superintendent's slide presentation in January did not reference the School Board salary increase. It was not mentioned in the Superintendent's "highlights" listed on the HCPS website. In that post it was apparently included under the description "salary enhancements and decompression for targeted job families to further improve starting salaries, pay equity, and regional competitiveness."

The Board of Supervisors brought the issue to light at the March 28th JEC meeting during a discussion about challenging adjustments being considered to honor the

proposed 5% raises for all employees and the need for additional pay increases to be competitive with neighboring school districts. Not only did we learn of the School Board slyly pushing through this 60% pay increase for themselves, but that these appointed persons, not employees of Hanover County, also receive Hanover County employee health insurance as part of their compensation-the only County Board to have that benefit.

John Axelle, School Board Chair, claimed that because the School Board has not had a raise since 2007 that this 60% raise would be comparable to the raises the Board of Supervisors have received over the same period. This is false. In the last 18 years the Hanover Board of Supervisors have had periodic salary adjustments that amount to an increase of 28.9%. For further comparison, the Hanover Planning Commissioners, also appointed, have not had a raise since 2007 and do not receive health insurance benefits. We do support salary review for the Planning Commission which has been promised by the HCBoS.

School Board member John Redd, representing Mechancisville district, has occupied his seat less than one year and feels strongly that he deserves this raise. In an email on the topic, obtained through Freedom of Information Act, he called into question the integrity of the Hanover Supervisors, calling them "deceitful" and accused them of having questionable motives for their public service. Most School Board members are recently appointed, already retired from other careers. We would like to know, how many part-time County employees are provided with health care coverage?

We agree with the Supervisors who expressed concern and pushed back. They stated the obvious. The optics of our School Board trying to sneak in a 60% raise for themselves in such challenging times are very bad. School Board members should be hyper-focused on supporting staff and educators who are rising to the challenges they face everyday. The School Board has been largely responsible for the County's recent negative press, the hard feelings in our community, and what we believe are completely unnecessary distractions. We do not believe they are deserving of a raise. We do not think the School Board should be focused on personal monetary gain over dedication to, and service to, our staff and students. Until they begin to focus on the betterment of our children- including Asian, Black, Brown, LGBTQ+ students, & those with differing abilities, those of diverse faiths, all those being bullied and harassed, we will still hold that they are not doing their jobs and not deserving of a raise.

We were told there was no funding for a Diversity Director which is badly needed in Hanover County. We are told there is no funding for the number of needed mental health professionals in our schools. We scrounge to increase the pay of our overworked teachers, but we can quietly find money for a huge increase for the School Board?

We call for the removal of the \$37,000 total funding for these raises and going forward, more transparency in the HCPS budget process regarding salary increases for all school administrative personnel and the School Board.

Pat Jordan, President
Hanover County NAACP

ABOUT THE HANOVER COUNTY NAACP

The Hanover County Branch was established in 1946 at the First Union Baptist Church in Mechanicsville, Virginia with the dream of having an organization dedicated to the realization of the principle of equality and justice for all. Through civil rights advocacy and community involvement we continue the struggle to achieve freedom, justice, and dignity for all. Our strength is derived from the dedication and untiring efforts of our volunteers. Individual membership, fund raising activities and corporate sponsorship allows this organization to continue serving the community.