



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Halifax County, NC – August 16, 2023
HCS Eastman Update

Superintendent Dr. Eric Cunningham of Halifax County Schools stood before the Halifax County Board of Commissioners on August 7, 2023, to present a compelling proposal for the construction of an innovative PreK-8 school facility. This presentation marked a pivotal moment as Dr. Cunningham appealed for approval to pursue additional funding once available, solidifying the county's commitment to providing top-tier educational opportunities for its students.

Halifax County Schools recently achieved a significant milestone with their successful application for funding under the Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund. Securing an impressive amount of \$39,083,000, supplemented by Halifax County's devoted match of \$2,057,000, the total funding for the project reached an admirable sum of \$41,140,000 during the fiscal year 2021-2022. However, the cornerstone of this funding hinged on a pivotal requirement – the project's commitment to remaining either a middle school or a combined K-8 institution. Adherence to this stipulation was crucial in accessing the full \$40 million in grant funding.

Acknowledging the evolving landscape of educational infrastructure and mindful of macroeconomic trends, the state legislature demonstrated its commitment to supporting transformative education projects through the State Budget H.B. 259. This budget, currently under deliberation, encompasses provisions that stand to allocate an additional \$10 million in capital funding. This funding will be accompanied by a 5% county match, a testament to the county's dedication to the education of its youth. The Halifax County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the request for additional funding for the new PreK-8 school.

The visionary design of the proposed PreK-8 school has reached a remarkable completion rate of approximately 60%. The allocated budget for this ambitious project stands at \$49.5 million, a testament to the county's diligent efforts in optimizing cost-efficiency without compromising the quality of the educational environment. Collaborative measures have been integrated into the design process, effectively reducing the initial projection of \$52 million to the current budget of \$49.5 million.

The clock is ticking, and time is of the essence as the project races forward to meet its target start date of January 2024. This strategic timeline ensures that the doors of the new PreK-8 school will swing open in the fall of 2025, ready to welcome eager students into a state-of-the-art educational facility that will undoubtedly shape their academic journey and enrich their lives for years to come.

Superintendent Dr. Eric Cunningham, alongside the Halifax County Board of Commissioners, remains steadfast in their pursuit of securing the necessary funding to realize this visionary project. With an unwavering dedication to the county's educational future, this collaborative effort stands as a beacon of hope, promising a brighter and more promising horizon for Halifax County's youth.