

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

April 27, 2006

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, April 27, 2006, at 4:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Joshua Kaufman, Chairman
Diane Mikulis, Vice Chairman
Patricia S. Gordon
Mary Kay Sigaty
Courtney Watson
Jeff Lasser, Student Member

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Raymond Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Arlene Conway, Recording Secretary

Chairman Joshua Kaufman called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m., and Mr. Lasser led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Approval of Agenda

The following changes were made to the agenda:

Delete: Item VII.B. – Nontenured Teachers.
 Item VII.G. – Donations.
 Item IX.C. – Policy 2050 – Attendance.

Add: Item VIII.A. – Administrative Appointments.

Action: Ms. Sigaty moved approval of the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin shared information about his recent surprise visits to a number of schools to recognize recipients of various awards for outstanding performance. He also attended the recent PC Olympics at the Applications and Research Lab (ARL), which was sponsored by the Lazarus Foundation.

Mr. Robert Glascock, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Ms. Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration, provided updates on technology and the implementation of SIMS (Student Information Management System).

Mr. Glascock expressed appreciation to everyone involved in the recent upgrade of instructional technology across the school system. In only 50 days, staff accomplished the following:

- Installed 33 new mobile labs.
- Distributed 2,500 laptops to achieve a 1:1 computer-to-teacher ratio.
- Replaced computers in 37 general purpose labs.
- Distributed 400 instructional computers in elementary and middle schools.
- Installed 57 new servers in elementary and middle schools.
- Upgraded 4,200 computers, standardized applications, and installed virus protection software in all elementary and middle schools.
- Upgraded and standardized all elementary and middle school networks for increased security and usability.
- Removed and recycled 3,000 instructionally invalid computers from schools.

With regard to SIMS, Mr. Glascock indicated that staff continues to communicate with *Chancery* on a regular basis and provide targeted technical assistance and support for school-based users. The school system has contracted for a network analysis at two high schools. Based on the results, network analyses will be conducted at all high schools. Additionally, a consultant has been hired to assist high school assistant principals with individual student schedules as well as the master schedule.

Based on input from school staff, HCPSS has decided to continue to implement SIMS next year but will offer schools the option of using a Grade Transporter tool to generate local reports.

Mr. Glascock indicated that the school system also must evaluate the extent to which the *Chancery* product meets the technical and operational requirements of SIMS, which will be done through an independent third-party assessment. This analysis will allow the system to make a well-informed decision about future development of the overall K-12 SIMS.

Mr. Glascock reported that the long-term goal is to implement a comprehensive system of data collection, storage, and reporting tools, which will include a Student

Information System, a data warehouse, and enhanced network capacity. He indicated that to date the cost for implementing SIMS totals \$803,000 and breaks down as follows:

- \$ 80,000 Standard licensing fee/annual maintenance.
- \$650,000 Software upgrade at high schools.
- \$ 20,000 Network analysis at two high schools and Central Office.
- \$ 53,000 HCPSS overtime pay to school-based staff.

On a related topic, Ms. Wise reported on steps that schools take to ensure the accuracy of grades and transcripts. She noted that over 16,000 transcripts were sent to postsecondary institutions this fall, and schools have reported no errors.

Discussion:

Mr. Glascock explained that the 33 mobile computer labs have been placed in a combination of elementary, middle, and high schools to meet technology standards.

Mrs. Watson emphasized that no errors were reported in student records. Mrs. Mikulis expressed appreciation for the response by staff to this issue, especially at the school level.

Mr. Kaufman commended high school staff, particularly registrars, counselors, and data clerks, for their work in ensuring the accuracy of data. He also commended Mr. Glascock for the idea of conducting audits over the summer and providing parents with student records.

Mr. Kaufman urged staff consider seeking some sort of redress from Chancery, either in the future or in the current agreement, with regard to the unanticipated expenses that have occurred. He noted that the school system will continue to maintain the SIMS system at the high school level next year but will defer the implementation schedule for elementary and middle schools until a third party assessment of the current software vendor has been conducted.

Mr. Lasser expressed appreciation to both school-based and Central Office staff for their efforts and dedication to improving SIMS.

Student Member's Report

Mr. Lasser provided information on the recent HCASC (Howard County Association of School Councils) Executive Board elections and HCPSS elections for Student Member to the Board of Education. A number of positive remarks have been received regarding the change in format and ease of the new system used this year. Student Member election results will be available before the next Board meeting.

Student Representative's Report

Mr. Will Harris, Atholton HS, reported on extracurricular activities and school accomplishments. The school's motto is "We inspire excellence together."

Board members commended Mr. Harris on his presentation and asked that he provide more information to the Board on the leadership cadre at Atholton HS.

Consent Agenda

Bids and Contracts; Summer School Principals; SB 894 Certification; Categorical Transfer/FY2006 Operating Budget; FY 2006 Capital Budget Transfer - 2; and Minutes of Regular Meetings of March 23 and April 6, 2006, and meeting with County Council on April 5, 2006.

Motion: Ms. Gordon moved approval of the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Kaufman asked that Bid P-1 – Student Transportation be pulled for discussion.

Action: Mrs. Watson offered an amended motion to approve the Consent Agenda, minus Bid P-1 as noted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-2	Custodial Paper Products	
	BPT Manufacturing Co.	\$ 4,522
	Acme Paper & Supply Co., Inc.	18,270
	Calico	32,996
	Porters Supply Co., Inc.	<u>42,354</u>
	Total	\$98,142
P-3	Fire Alarm Replacement – Thunder Hill ES	
	ARK Systems, Inc.	\$89,287
P-4	On-Call Painting Services	
	Astro Construction, Inc.	\$ 43,750 est.
	Colossal Contractors, Inc.	43,750 est.
	JNA Painting Co., Inc.	43,750 est.
	Mid-Atlantic GC, Inc.	43,750 est.
	Mirabile Construction	43,750 est.
	OMF Contractors, Inc.	43,750 est.
	Tito Contractors, Inc.	43,750 est.
	Total Contracting, Inc.	<u>43,750 est.</u>
	Total	\$350,000 est.

P-5	Hardwood Flooring	
	Weyer's Floor Service, Inc.	\$28,515
	Master Care Flooring	<u>62,923</u>
	Total	\$91,438
P-6	On-Call Glass	
	A.B's Glass World, Inc.	\$25,000
	JLN Construction, LLC	<u>25,000</u>
	Total	\$50,000

Appointment of Elementary, Middle, and High Summer School Principals – Approved by the Board.

Elementary Summer School:	Gavin West, Principal
Middle Summer School:	Paula Gary, Principal
High Summer School:	Rick Robb, Principal

Superintendent's Certification of Reporting Requirements Under SB 894 – Approved by the Board.

Authorized the Board Chairman, Superintendent, and Chief Operating Officer to sign the Certification and attest to the accuracy of the Bi-Annual Report of Revenues and Expenditures through March 31, 2006.

FY 2006 Categorical Budget Transfer – Approved by the Board.

FY 2006 Capital Budget Transfer – 2 – Approved by the Board.

Transfer of \$3 million from Systemic Renovations to ARL Redesign.

Minutes of Regular Meetings of March 23, 2006, and April 6, 2006, and Meeting with County Council of April 5, 2006 – Approved by the Board.

Bids and Contracts

P-1	Student Transportation	
	Trans-White, Inc.	\$ 48,060
	C.T.T.A.	66,600
	K.A.M.	<u>69,300</u>
	Total	\$183,960

Mr. Doug Pindell, Purchasing Officer, explained that staff is currently evaluating three routes in addition to three others that will be brought to the next Board meeting for approval. He noted that a number of routes were not competitively bid, and staff will reevaluate the routes to determine if there are problems or if routes can be combined. He

also noted that fuel costs are an important factor in the bidding process, and contractors are waiting for final information on the FY 2007 HCPSS budget. Mr. Kaufman noted the importance of ensuring sufficient increases and developing realistic budgets.

Action: Mr. Kaufman moved approval of Bid P-1. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Administrative Appointments

	<u>Present Position</u>	<u>Appointed Position</u>
Thomas Miller	Facilitator for e-Learning	Executive Director of Instruction and Business Technology

Action: Ms. Sigaty moved approval of the appointment. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Jose Stevenson	Coordinator of Testing - Montgomery County Public School System	Director of Information Technology
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Action: Ms. Sigaty moved approval of the appointment. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Resolution in Honor of Pupil Personnel Worker Week

PROCLAMATION
National School Pupil Personnel Worker Week
May 1-5, 2006

Whereas, each child is unique and valuable and is, therefore, worthy of individual and special consideration, and must have the opportunity to experience good, mental, emotional and physical health in order to be successful in school; and

Whereas, Pupil Personnel Workers work to foster awareness of the unique characteristics of every child and the importance of their education, the home, school and community; work cooperatively in encouraging all children in the development of their ability and to recognize and solve problems; work to develop and participate in the planning of educational programs which promote more effective learning and to promote better understanding regarding the physical, psychological, medical and social resources available in the community; and

Whereas, Pupil Personnel Workers are specialists trained to assess pupil's needs to facilitate or provide appropriate services, assume the role of school's liaison with community, social agencies, organizations and functions in order to affect parent and child referrals; and

Whereas, Pupil Personnel workers, as child advocates, assist children and parents in bridging the gap between home and school in issues dealing with a child's physical, psychological, social and intellectual growth, and ... it is appropriate that Marylanders take the time to recognize the important and vital role that Pupil Personnel workers play in the personal and academic development of our State's children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Howard County does hereby proclaim the week of May 1-5, 2006 as National Pupil Personnel Worker Week.

Joshua Kaufman, Chairman
Board of Education of Howard County

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent
Howard County Public School System

Action: Ms. Gordon moved approval of the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Dr. Cousin recognized the Pupil Personnel Workers in attendance, and Board members expressed appreciation for their services.

Proclamation: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Presenter: Mr. Ray Brown.

**PROCLAMATION
Designating May 2006
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month**

WHEREAS, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month celebrates the cultural, intellectual, economic, and social contributions of Americans of Asian/Pacific heritage; and

WHEREAS, More than 13.1 million Americans are of Asian/Pacific Islander origin; and number over 25,000 in Howard County alone; and

WHEREAS, The school system has 6,689 students and 158 employees of Asian/Pacific American origin; and

WHEREAS, The vitality of the community can be seen in the three Chinese Language schools, over 14 Korean churches, one Buddhist temple, and a number of ethnic businesses catering to the community; and

WHEREAS, Asian/Pacific Americans bring to our society a rich heritage representing more than 47 ethnic groups of many languages, cultural and religious traditions; and

WHEREAS, As family members, citizens, and involved members of the community, Asian/Pacific Americans reinforce the values and ideals that are essential to the continued well-being of our Nation and our community; and,

WHEREAS, Asian/Pacific Americans, one of the fastest growing segments of our population, support the standard of educational excellence for every child; and

WHEREAS, The theme in 2006 is: *Celebrating Decades of Pride, Partnerships and Progress;*

THEREFORE, BET IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education declares May 2006 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month in The Howard County Public School System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all those in the Howard County community join in the celebration by extending their knowledge about the contributions Asian/Americans make to our culturally diverse community.

Board Chairman

Superintendent

Action: Mrs. Watson moved approval of the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Western ES–School Naming Committee Recommendation

Presenters: Dr. Mark Stout, Coordinator of Secondary Social Studies, and Ms. Marion Miller, Administrative Director for Elementary Schools.

Recommended Name: Dayton Oaks Elementary School

Dayton is the name of the area in which the school is located, and Ten Oaks Road is the street on which the school has been built. The committee felt this name served well in combining the qualities of the two most commonly suggested names: Ten Oaks and Dayton.

Action: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the name Dayton Oaks ES. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Relocatable Classrooms – Assignment

Presenter: Mr. David Drown, Director of Transportation.

Mr. Drown stated that with slower enrollment growth and declining enrollment in some areas, it appears to be more prudent to relocate as many existing units as possible rather than continue the past practice of purchasing new units.

Recommended reassignment of relocatable classrooms for the 2006/2007 school year:

<u>Elementary School</u>		<u>Middle School</u>		<u>High School</u>	
Bryant Woods	+1	Clarksville	+1	Howard	-5
Clarksville	-2	Ellicott Mills	+2	Long Reach	-2
Pointers Run	-1	Glenwood	+2		
Swansfield	+1	Hammond	+2		
Triadelphia Ridge	-2*	Mount View	+3		
		Murray Hill	+2		
		Patapsco	-3		

*Includes one unit to be disposed.

It was also recommended that Clemens Crossing ES receive two units, one new and one replacement.

Discussion:

Mr. Drown explained the planning assumptions used to assign relocatables. He noted that the cost of a new unit is \$95,000, and the cost to relocate an existing unit is \$65,000.

Mrs. Watson expressed concern regarding enrollment projections and the loss of five units at Howard HS. Mr. Drown explained that the renovation will yield 16 new classrooms, and four relocatable units will remain at the school. It is also necessary to move some units because they are located where construction will take place.

Regarding Glenwood MS, additional relocatables are being placed at the school to address staffing needs, even though the units may not be needed in the following year. The school is receiving two of the four units requested, which will provide classrooms for teachers rather than “carts” and will alleviate the need to hold some classes in the hallways.

Board members expressed concern regarding the costs associated with this proposal. Additional information was requested on issues at Glenwood MS and whether the MDE

(Maryland Department of the Environment) will support the use of additional relocatables at the school.

Mrs. Watson noted the importance of aligning the process for assigning relocatables with the feasibility study and asked that information be provided to the Board on this issue.

Mrs. Mikulis pointed out that Waverly ES is overcapacity by 66 seats but is not receiving additional relocatables. Mr. Drown stated that the principal did not request any units for 2006/2007, and the school will be receiving an addition for the 2007/2008 school year.

Superintendent's FY 2007 Operating and Capital Budget Priorities in Response to County Executive's Proposed Budget

Presenter: Dr. Sydney Cousin.

Operating Budget:

The Board requested \$396.5 million in county funds, of which the County Executive's budget provides \$393.5 million. Within the \$393.5 million, the County Executive also included \$400,000 that was formerly shown as a separate grant for cable television operations. An amendment to the budget will be needed to include this \$400,000. In addition, the latest estimate of state funding from MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) is approximately \$200,000 less than the amount included in the Board's budget request.

Dr. Cousin presented a proposed cut list that would reduce the Board's FY 2007 Operating Budget Request by \$3.6 million to meet the funding level recommended by the County Executive. The list of nonprioritized potential reductions includes two new guidance counselor positions, a new half-time school psychologist position, one new pupil personnel worker position, and five new custodial positions.

In addition, cuts totaling \$484,000 would be made to building and grounds maintenance. The purchase of media materials for the northeastern elementary school would be deferred until FY 2008, and \$90,000 would be cut from cable TV and video production. It is anticipated that \$700,000 could be saved by staff turnover, and \$1.6 million from FY 2006 year-end funds could be used to pay a portion of next year's health insurance costs.

It was also noted that increases in fuel costs have resulted in a current deficit of \$1.3 million, which could spiral as high as \$1.8 to \$2 million. Funds must be found in this year's budget to meet those costs while trying to protect the classroom as much as possible. This will also be of concern in the FY 2007 budget.

The Board, Superintendent, and staff will work with the County Council in May to review the school system's budget request. A County Council public hearing on the education budget will be held May 6, 2006, with public work sessions on the school system budget scheduled for May 10 and May 18, if needed.

Discussion:

Board members expressed disappointment with the need for reductions and noted the difficulty in reducing a budget that contains no unnecessary items.

Board members pointed out that some counties are fully funding their education budgets and encouraged the public to testify at the County Council's public hearing in support of the budget for HCPSS.

Capital Budget:

The County Executive has proposed \$67.2 million in capital funds for the school system. When combined with the state allocation of \$18.2 million, the total represents a \$14.6 million reduction to the Board's capital request. Specific projects not funded include: \$1.1 million for a new maintenance facility; \$900,000 for an educational specification/equity implementation plan; \$9.0 million for the Old Cedar Lane addition/renovation; and \$3.6 million to fund the Clarksville MS renovation.

It is recommended that additional state funding of \$5.4 million be allocated to fully fund phase one of the Worthington ES renovation project and partially fund the Clarksville MS renovation project, specifically the cafeteria expansion. This still leaves the school system \$3.6 million short to fully fund the Clarksville MS phase one renovation, which includes work associated with the HVAC system and the reconfiguration of existing space.

Discussion:

Mrs. Watson expressed particular concern regarding systemic renovation funds and stated that the Board must be adamant with elected officials about restoring funds for Clarksville MS. She emphasized the importance of providing revenues to fund renovations at older schools.

Mr. Kaufman stressed the need to also fund the educational specification implementation plan, which will allow the school system to comprehensively plan to bring older schools in line with educational specifications to the extent possible. He also emphasized the need to communicate the school system's needs to state and local officials. Mr. Ray Brown noted that the cost of a needs assessment has most likely increased to close to \$1.5 million, and the \$30 million placeholder in the budget to address those needs will also be significantly higher.

Ms. Sigaty pointed out the possibility of reducing some funds allocated for relocatable classrooms and noted the need to wait on addressing the reallocation of various funds until the County Council and Executive have made final budget decisions.

Mr. Kaufman invited the public to join the Board at 8:30 a.m. on May 6, 2006, for refreshments prior to the public hearing before the County Council at 9:00 a.m.

Athletic/Activities Manager Unit Composition

Presenter: Ms. Sue Mascaro, Director of Staff Relations.

Pending budget approval, a change in position from Athletic Director to Athletics and Activities Manager will begin in the 2006/2007 school year, with one position allocated to each high school.

Based on elements of the job description and meetings with HCEA (Howard County Education Association) and HCAA (Howard County Administrators Association), staff recommends that the new position category of Athletics and Activities Manager be designated within the HCAA bargaining unit.

Board members thanked staff for providing additional information along with the job description to address all concerns. Ms. Mascaro expressed appreciation to Mr. Mike Williams, Athletics Coordinator, for his work on the job description.

Action: Ms. Gordon moved that the Board accept the recommendation to designate the Athletics and Activities Manager position to be within the HCAA bargaining unit. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Legislative Report

Presenter: Mr. Roger Plunkett, Business, Community, Government Relations Officer.

Mr. Plunkett presented the final Legislative Report for the 2006 Maryland General Assembly. At the bill signing ceremony on April 11, 2006, the Governor signed 47 measures into law. Additional bill signings are scheduled for April 25, May 2, and May 16, 2006.

Mr. Plunkett also noted that the Governor signed the pension reform bill and HB 1200 – Automated External Defibrillators Program. The school system is prepared to purchase the defibrillators through the Risk Management office, but training and maintenance will also play an important role in this program. Staff will prepare a report to the Board to provide an update on this issue.

Board members expressed concern regarding the fiscal impact of the defibrillator bill. This unfunded mandate requires the purchase of defibrillators for the school system at an

estimated cost of \$52,000 to \$60,000. In addition, maintenance and training for staff and coaches will require additional funding. Dr. Cousin stated that the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services has volunteered to help with the training. Staff is also looking for other sources of funding, but eventually it will be necessary to include funds in the budget for this program.

Ms. Gordon commended Mr. Plunkett for his work during the legislative session. She noted that Mr. Plunkett attended legislative committee meetings regularly, and his input was solicited and given a great deal of weight. In addition, his comments were effective, knowledgeable, and sophisticated. Other counties will be using his report as well.

Mr. Kaufman pointed out that the bill put forth by the Board regarding a superintendent's contract did not make it through committee, but he thanked Delegate Turner for sponsoring the bill and Mr. Plunkett for his efforts. Board members will discuss whether or not to submit the proposal again next year.

Board members discussed the implications of the bill on the Open Meetings Act and asked Mr. Blom, General Counsel, to provide an analysis of the language of the bill once it has been signed. Information on how the bill relates to conducting business of the Board was also requested, and it was noted that minutes of community meetings are not necessary because they do not involve the conduction of Board business.

FY 2007 Operating Budget Amendment

Presenter: Mr. David White, Budget Officer.

The County Executive's recommended FY 2007 operating budget provides \$393.5 million in county funds for the school system. Within the \$393.5 million, the County Executive also included \$400,000 that was formerly shown as a separate grant for cable television operations. Since the Board's budget request did not include cable television funding within the General Fund, an amendment to the budget of \$400,000 is needed.

It was noted that this adjustment is a result of the county government's decision to change the accounting of cable television operations in the budget.

Action: Mrs. Watson moved approval of the operating budget amendment to the FY 2007 General Fund Operating Budget Request to be submitted to the County Executive and County Council. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

A letter will be sent to the County Executive requesting this amendment, which also serves as a reduction in the school system's budget.

Scheduling

By consensus, the Board agreed to move scheduling to the evening session.

Policy 2911 - Religion and Religious Materials and Policy 1801 (formerly 13111) – Religious Observances

Presenters: Mrs. Min Kim, Equity Assurance/Human Relations Coordinator, and Mrs. Sue Mascaro, Director of Staff Relations.

Policy 2911 – Religion and Religious Materials*Highlights:*

- Two new definitions: Proselytizing and Religion.
- Three new standards: Guest Speakers, Establishment Clause, Baccalaureate Ceremonies.
- Policy does not contain implementation procedures.

Policy 1801 (formerly 13111) – Religious Observances*Highlights:*

- The original Policy 13111 was not student centered, resulting in more extensive revisions than Policy 2911 - Religion and Religious Materials.
- The proposed policy establishes procedures for school programs and activities that directly impact students and staff.
- Two new definitions and nine new standards were added to the policy
- Implementation Procedures are aligned with the policy's new standards. Implementation Procedure V. represents the only part of the policy where consensus was not reached. The procedure was written with the approval of the majority of the committee, and a minority report was submitted to explain the wishes of the three dissenting committee members.
- Implementation Procedure VI. provides guidance for religious attire.

Next Steps:

- Public Hearing – Tuesday, May 23, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.
- Adoption by the Board – Thursday, June 8, 2006.

Mrs. Mascaro recognized and thanked the members of the policy review committees for their time and effort to revise the policies.

Discussion:

Mr. Kaufman pointed out the significance of both policies concerning religion and religious observances and the need to ensure that the policies result in an appropriate balance. He recommended that a work session be held immediately following the public

hearing on May 23, 2006, to respond to the following Board Members' concerns and requests for additional information.

Policy 2911

- Standard E. – Religious themes are permissible if it serves an educational goal in the curriculum. Mr. Kaufman expressed concern that the terminology “educational goal” is broad and should be more specifically defined.
- Standard F. – Religious music in a concert should reflect a balance. He again expressed concern that “balance” is a broad term and should be defined. Mrs. Mascaro responded that the committee had the same concern and there was considerable discussion about the use of the term “balance.” However, the committee could not decide on an alternative term.

Mrs. Watson suggested that the definition of “balance” should reflect the school system’s neutrality in relation to religion.

- Ms. Sigaty asked for assurance that the proposed policies have been completely reviewed by legal counsel to ensure that they adhere to the law.
- Mr. Kaufman noted that this policy does not include Implementation Procedures, and he suggested that the Board discuss at the work session how it is determined whether or not a policy has Implementation Procedures.
- Mrs. Mikulis referred to the second paragraph in the Policy Statement and asked if “the arts” should be included with “history.”
- Ms. Sigaty noted that the Board’s policies include structured legal references; however, in reference to readability and easy access, she wondered if references to other policies or the law should be included in the standards, because the policies are an interpretation of the law.

Policy 1801

- Mr. Lasser asked why references to holidays mandated by the Maryland State School Law are being removed from the regulations. Mr. Blom explained that according to the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, it would be unconstitutional for the Board to make a calendar decision to honor any particular religious holiday. The reference to schools closing for a particular religious holiday may seem to implicate that it is for a religious purpose. The Board of Education is entitled to close schools on a day when there are curriculum and/or administrative concerns because of excessive staff and student absences resulting from a religious holiday, and those decisions should remain a calendar issue and not a policy issue.

- Implementation Procedures – V. – Mrs. Watson asked if there are any other school systems that permit students to be excused from class once per week for a thirty-minute period to fulfill a religious obligation. Mrs. Kim responded that there is no other Maryland school system that permits students to leave school for religious obligations. Some schools may allow students to pray in school as an accommodation. Mrs. Kim also spoke with equity officials in Connecticut and Michigan, which have large Muslim populations, and neither state has any school district which allows students to leave school for prayer.

In Dearborn, Michigan, students are allowed to leave school for two hours per week for religious instruction. Mrs. Kim asked the Dearborn representative specifically how many students leave the school for Friday prayers, and he responded that out of approximately 8,000 Muslim students, 20-25 students utilize the policy.

Mrs. Watson asked that staff provide information on other religious practices, similar to Friday prayer, which the Board may be asked to accommodate if the Friday prayer is permitted.

- Mrs. Watson asked what the implications would be for students being absent for 20 percent of class time and if students who miss class time for religious observances would be exempt from that part of the Attendance policy. In addition, she asked staff to identify the implications of the policy on teachers in terms of extra work that might be required to help the student make up the work.
- Board members pointed out the mission of educating students and asked about the impact of allowing students to miss 30 minutes or more of class per week, particularly for classes in which students must pass the HSA to graduate. Mr. Kaufman asked that input be provided by curriculum staff and principals regarding this issue either before or during the work session.
- Ms. Gordon asked that information be provided on how many different religions are represented in Howard County and whether there have been any requests for early dismissals related to religious practices.
- With regard to the minority report, Mrs. Mikulis asked if praying independently for 30 minutes was the same as religious instruction.
- Mrs. Mikulis asked for additional information regarding Friday prayers for Muslim students and whether it is only for high schools students or for other family members as well. She also asked about observances that may be held later in the day.
- Mr. Kaufman suggested that committee members, particularly those who submitted the minority report, attend the work session to answer questions regarding religious instruction, e.g., what exactly is covered, is there a curriculum,

- is it religious instruction, is it prayer, is it unique to a particular Mosque or something across the religion.
- Mrs. Mikulis asked if there is something that by religious law must occur at 1:45 in the afternoon for a certain segment of the population and/or if this is preparatory to something else that occurs later that involves a larger group.
 - Ms. Sigaty asked about requests to leave school at the same time each week and how that not only affects instruction but also how it affects participation in cocurricular and extracurricular activities where students commit to a timeframe and attendance is integral to the activity.
 - Mr. Kaufman expressed concerns regarding the 30-minute absence as referenced in Item V. of the Implementation Procedures. He noted the need to address this at the work session and suggested that some type of language be included to allow for review of a student's performance to ensure that the core objectives of education are not compromised by absences.
 - Ms. Gordon noted that the Board was made aware that only male students had been leaving school for religious observances. She asked for some indication of equity in that situation.
 - Mr. Lasser asked if this provision is intended to serve only a certain group of the population and whether this could be addressed in the attendance policy (Policy 2050).
 - Mr. Kaufman expressed concern with the way Item IV. Standards – G. is written in that it allows staff to make decisions that should be made by the Board. Mr. Blom stated that the Board could rewrite this statement to specifically address issues as the Board sees fit. Mr. Kaufman asked that this be discussed during the work session.

Policy 3441 - Student Responsibilities and Rights

Presenter: Mr. David Bruzga, Secondary Administrative Director.

Policy 3441 was reviewed with Policy 3431 – Discipline and the Student code of Conduct. The proposal has been revised by staff at the Board's direction.

Staff presented a brief summary on the revision process and highlighted proposed changes. A public hearing will be held on May 11, with action scheduled for May 25, 2006.

Discussion:

Board members expressed appreciation to Mr. Bruzga and staff for the extraordinary amount of work that went into rewriting this policy so well within a very short timeframe.

Ms. Sigaty questioned the intended audience of the policy. She stated that the language is not student friendly and indicated that the policy may not be written in the language appropriate for its audience. Mr. Lasser agreed and stated that it would be helpful to have student rights adequately addressed.

The majority of the Board indicated that the policy is written for parents and the community at large and should read the same as other school system policies. It was suggested that a one-page synopsis of the policy be prepared in language appropriate for each level (elementary, middle, and high) and provided to students each school year.

Mr. Blom explained that the policy was written in accordance with guidelines provided by MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education). Mr. Bruzga pointed out that this policy goes beyond the state template in extensively addressing grievance and appeal procedures, use of school facilities, and includes provisions for a nurturing environment. Mr. Kaufman asked that language be included in the policy under due process to give students the opportunity to answer charges in writing. Language should also be changed to indicate that students “will” be accorded due process when discipline is administered.

Mr. Kaufman asked that Mr. Blom inform the Board of any particular restrictions that may be imposed with regard to students having the right to form organizations within the school and that any restrictions be included in the policy.

Board members also noted the need for discussion on whether the Board has authority to develop dress codes and the definition of nonschool-sponsored clubs.

Recess – The meeting was recessed by the Chairman at 6:52 p.m. and reconvened at 7:32 p.m.

Public Forum

Ms. Linda Turner, Parent, addressed the Board with concerns about the nature of the accommodations made for her daughter during testing.

Appointment - Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Ms. Ellen Giles, CAC Chairman, reported on recent activities and elections of the CAC. Ms. Rose Marie Dennison will serve as the new CAC Chairman. She also spoke about the success of the middle school foreign language program and upcoming programs to be aired on Channel 72 regarding pension reform and the HCEA Satisfaction Survey.

Ms. Giles thanked the Board for their support over the years. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Kaufman expressed appreciation for all the work Ms. Giles has done as Chairman of the CAC.

Appointment - Howard County Education Association (HCEA) – Satisfaction Survey

Presenter: Ms. Ann De Lacy, HCEA President.

Ms. De Lacy reported on the results of the survey and noted that HCEA met with Dr. Cousin and his cabinet to make further recommendations based on the survey results.

Specific findings from this year's survey include:

- 72 percent of respondents indicated that overall morale in the worksite was good.
- 84 percent indicated confidence in the Superintendent.
- 90 percent personally feel successful in their work, while 78 percent indicate their working conditions are conducive to success.
- 44 percent have experienced or witnessed harassing behavior from colleagues, supervisors, or parents. An analysis of the open-ended responses indicates staff is subjected to harassing behavior in the form of cursing and intimidation by parents; often in the presence of administrators and often in the form of emails (which they are directed to answer).
- 51 percent of respondents reported student misbehavior interfering with learning, while 74 percent indicated administrators support staff in enforcing discipline. Open-ended responses suggest that discipline procedures of students are hazy in many situations and are often strongly influenced by parent pressure.
- 90 percent of respondents reported working beyond the school day, so workload still continues to be a problem of serious concern.

Ms. De Lacy stated that HCEA plans to review the data in more detail, disaggregate the data, and consider responses from staff in job category groups and at different experience levels.

Discussion:

Ms. Gordon noted that the data indicates a lack of confidence in the Professional Development Program and asked that concerns be communicated to administrators.

Board members expressed concern regarding issues related to harassment and indicated the need to disaggregate the data in order to adequately address concerns. Mrs. Watson pointed out that the Civility Policy currently being developed may provide help with this issue.

Public Hearing – Policy 10200 – Student RepresentationMr. Sabastian Johnson, Student Member to the Montgomery County Board of Education

- Expressed support for partial voting rights for the Howard County Student Member to the Board.
- Read a letter from the Chairman of the Montgomery County Board of Education in support of partial voting rights for the student member.

Ms. Ellen Giles – Citizens’ Advisory Committee Chairman

- Testified that she was pleased to see a more rigorous election process.
- Questioned the exclusion of the student member vote on redistricting.

Public Hearing – Policy 3431 – Discipline/Code of Conduct

No testimony.

Public Hearing – Policy 3443 – Student Search and SeizureMs. Ellen Giles, Citizens’ Advisory Committee Chairman

- Stated that the CAC will submit comments on the policy in writing.

Policy 1001-Policy Development and Adoption

Presenter: Ms. Ellen Miller, Policy Specialist.

Staff recommended that the policy be amended to change the policy review period to a six-year cycle, effective July 1, 2006. Several rationale were provided to support this recommendation, including how time-consuming the current process is and its effects on staff, the instructional process, and on community representatives who are involved throughout the review process. A six-year cycle would involve review/revision of approximately 15 policies per year, in addition to policies added to the cycle for regulatory or other reasons.

Two additional minor changes were also recommended to edit a legal reference and to clarify that all policies do not require Implementation Procedures.

A full report will be brought to the Board in July, which will summarize FY 2006 activities and propose a schedule of policy review for FY 2007.

Discussion:

Board members agreed that the current schedule is burdensome on staff and stakeholder groups.

Ms. Sigaty expressed concern over the lack of student representation on some policy review committees. Difficulties in obtaining representatives from other stakeholder

groups were also noted. Ms. Miller explained that different avenues for receiving input are being tried, including the use of focus groups.

Some concerns were raised regarding the issue of Implementation Procedures. It was noted that the Board would still have the discretion to direct the Superintendent to develop these procedures when desired.

Board members agreed to accept the recommended changes at this time and to review the policy further to determine if additional changes are warranted.

Motion: Mrs. Watson moved that the Board adopt Policy 1001 as amended, changing the review period to a six-year cycle, effective July 1, 2006; changing the language to “if any” on page three of four, Item V.B.1.; and editing the legal reference as noted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon.

Staff indicated that no objections have been received from the public regarding the suggested changes.

Action: The motion was approved by the members of the Board (5/0). Mr. Lasser supported the motion.

Scheduling

The Board set a date for two administrative appeals.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 8:20 p.m.