

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

June 20, 2006

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 20, 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 Gordon  
Mary Kay Sigaty  
Courtney Watson

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

Chairman Joshua Kaufman called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m., and Mrs. Mikulis led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Public Forum

Ms. Colleen Morris, teacher, Guilford ES spoke about teacher concerns with the Religious Observances Policy, namely: Instructional time being missed, and increased teacher workload.

## Approval of Agenda

Dr. Cousin noted the following changes to the agenda:

Add: IV. Maryland School Assessments (MSA)  
Move: IX. B. Scheduling to end of afternoon session

*Action:* Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the Board 5-0.

## Superintendent's Report/MSA Report

Dr. Cousin said that the Maryland State Department of Education released the 2006 assessments. He noted that the results for Howard County were very positive. He reported that overall, 88 percent of HCPSS students reached proficiency in reading and 84 percent in mathematics. Dr. Cousin also noted that Howard County African American

and Hispanic students have met the local standard of 70 percent, scoring at or above proficient in reading across grade levels. This year African American and Hispanic students at the elementary level have also met the local standard in mathematics. Dr. Cousin said that across grade levels, African American students have posted an increase of 13 percentage points in math over the last three years – moving from 51 percent at proficient or above to 64 percent.

Mrs. Erickson congratulated students and teachers who worked so hard to achieve these results. She reported that:

- All elementary schools met the county standard of 70 percent proficient or above in both reading and mathematics.
- All middle schools met the county standard in reading. In mathematics, 13 middle schools met the county standard.
- Trend data in reading shows that across grade levels all ethnic groups have made progress since 2004, and all racial/ethnic groups have met the county standard.
- Trend data in math shows that across grade levels all ethnic groups have made progress since 2004. Most notably, students receiving FARMS services have gained 13 percentage points and special education students have improved performance by 11 percentage points.
- At the elementary level, 33 schools have reached 80 percent proficiency or above in reading and 30 schools have reached 80 percent or above in mathematics. At the middle level, 14 schools have reached 80 percent proficiency or above in reading and 11 schools have reached 80 percent or above in math.
- Seven elementary schools have 95 percent at proficient or above in reading and seven elementary schools have 95 percent or above in math. Burleigh Manor Middle School reached 95 percent in reading.

Mrs. Erickson said the system still has work to do to ensure that English language learners and students receiving special education services meet local standards. A more detailed MSA report will be presented to the Board on July 13.

### **Student Member's Report**

The student member was not present to address the Board.

### **Student Representative's Report**

The student representative was not present to address the Board.

### **Consent Agenda**

Bids and Contracts, School Bus Contract Transfer, Donations, Minutes of May 18, 2006, Work Session; and Minutes of June 8, 2006, Closed Meeting Confidential and Official

Mrs. Watson requested Bids and Contracts P-2 be pulled.

*Action:* Mrs. Watson moved approval of the amended Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the Board 5-0.

Mrs. Watson noted that there was another bid which was lower and asked for an explanation of the formula as to how a bid is won.

Mr. Doug Pindell, Purchasing Officer, explained that at one time the school system went with the low bid, and the service was poor. The school system rebid again and used the same formula. The same company was low bid and due to the requirement, it necessitated using their services again. Again the school system was not satisfied with the service, and the formula was reevaluated. Mr. Pindell explained the formula used in the bidding process, and the company with the lowest bid did not necessarily have the experience and qualification staff was looking for. The company the school system is recommending has the appropriate experience including the U.S. State Department as one of their clients.

*Action:* Mrs. Watson moved approval of Bids and Contracts, P-2. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the Board 5-0.

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-1	Student Transportation	
	Royal Enterprises	\$49,716.00
	Newmarket Transportation, Inc.	<u>64,170.00</u>
	TOTAL	\$113,886.00
P-2	Copier Rental/Purchase	
	Meridian Imaging Solutions	\$147,378.00
P-3	Student Transportation	
	JC Bus Co	\$ 50,580.00
	Royal Enterprises	50,827.50
	Skinner Transportation	74,520.00
	Y & L Transportation	84,600.00
	ABC Transportation LLC	128,407.50
	O'Brien Bus Service, Inc.	149,351.40
	Bowen's Bus Service	<u>194,556.60</u>
	TOTAL	\$732,843.00
P-4	Paving Services	
	Melvin Benhoff Sons	\$ 30,519.00
	A.G. Parrott Company	32,000.00
	The American Asphalt Paving Co., Inc.	44,185.00
	M. Luis Construction Co., Inc.	<u>101,000.00</u>
	TOTAL	\$207,704.00



Joseph Dymek	Assistant Principal Patuxent Valley MS	Assistant Principal Hammond HS
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Mrs. Erickson read the following promotions and appointments:

Name	From:	To:
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### Middle

Melissa Shindel School	Assistant Principal Prince George's County	Assistant Principal Patuxent Valley Middle
Robert Motley School	Assistant Principal Centennial High School	Principal Patuxent Valley Middle
Jennifer Peduzzi	Office of Special Education	Principal Patapsco Middle School

### High

Martin Vandenberg	Assistant Principal Baltimore County	Assistant Principal Hammond High School
Kevin Dorsey	Teacher Marriotts Ridge High	Assistant Principal Centennial High School
Cara Moulds	Teacher Centennial High	Assistant Principal Marriotts Ridge High School
Elaine Reid	Teacher Long Reach High	Assistant Principal Oakland Mills High School
Nick Novak	Teacher River Hill High School	Assistant Principal River Hill High School
Chris Fritz	Teacher Atholton High School	Assistant Principal Atholton High School

*Action:* Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the Administrative Promotions and Appointments. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watson and approved by the Board 5-0.

**Howard County Administrators Association – Ratification of Contract Amendment**

*Presenter:* Mrs. Susan Mascaro, Director, Staff Relations/Operations.

Mrs. Mascaro, as chief negotiator for the school system, asked the Board to ratify an addendum to the negotiated agreement for the Howard County Administrators Association. This contract addendum includes new language and a salary lane for Athletics and Activities Managers and appropriate contract language adjustments.

*Action:* Ms. Sigaty moved approval of the Howard County Administrators Association – Ratification of Contract Amendment. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mikulis and approved by the Board 5-0.

**A New HCPSS Signature**

*Presenter:* Mr. Brian Duvall, Webmaster.

Mr. Duvall presented a report on a school system initiative to present a consistent visual image that is representative of the system's high quality. The new standardized "signature" is intended to embody what the school system is. The marketing of the "signature" will be extended to all the communications pieces such as letterhead, fax cover sheets, logo on trucks, mugs, etc.

The signature or branding will have a stylized flame, which is a traditional symbol of knowledge and learning. The text treatment and the forest green color represent an evolution of the currently used font and color. The stacked treatment helps emphasize Howard County, which is what differentiates it from other public school systems.

*Discussion:*

Mrs. Watson asked if the schools will be using up the old letterhead, envelopes, business cards, etc. Mr. Duvall said yes.

Mr. Kaufman said he would like to see options to join the Board's official seal with this "signature" for the Board's logo as well.

Ms. Sigaty said she sees individual letterhead from the schools and asked how this will work out to standardize the letterhead in all the schools. Mrs. Caplan said templates will be on line to help support schools needs yet not take away their individual identity.

**Antibullying Task Force Report**

*Presenters:* Mr. Robert Glascock, Assistant Superintendent, and Mrs. Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Glascock and Mrs. Wise presented the findings and recommendations of the HCPSS Antibullying Task Force, convened by the Superintendent to study the issue of bullying in schools and develop ways to address it. The committee recommends that HCPSS:

- Adopt the definition of bullying from the Safe Schools Reporting Act.
- Address antibullying standards and recommendations in the revision of Policy 3431, Discipline; Policy 3441, Student's Responsibilities and Rights; and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Revise Policy 3445, Violence and School Safety, for 2006-07.
- Address antibullying standards and recommendations when developing the Civility Policy.
- Identify components of a safe and orderly environment, and include specific anti-bullying strategies in School Improvement Plans.
- Integrate antibullying content and skills across all curriculum program areas.
- Provide ongoing professional development that enables staff to increase their knowledge and skills to address antibullying measures in the schools.
- Engage parents, families, and community organizations in the development, support, and enhancement of Goal 2 initiatives.
- Collect and review data on bullying to monitor the incidents of bullying and improvement efforts at the school and system level.

The next steps include plans to involve students in developing antibullying campaigns and to use data from the School Climate Survey to identify concerns and plan strategies. Progress will be reported as part of the Bridge to Excellence (BTE) update on Goal 2.

*Discussion:*

Ms. Gordon said there seems to be less concern on the part of the students in high school than in the lower grades. Mrs. Pamela Blackwell, Director, Student Services, said research says bullying primarily occurs in middle school. When staff started training, emphasis was placed on early intervention in the elementary and middle schools. There are programs in place in high schools, but bullying is recognized as harassment. Most high school students say there is no problem with bullying, but harassment appears to be an issue. Staff will look at this over the summer.

Mrs. Watson asked if it is possible to tell which programs are more effective now. Mrs. Wise said most of the programs are experiencing some degree of effectiveness. Schools are also doing programs on their own which is effective as well.

Mrs. Mikulis asked how many schools have peer mediation. Ms. Lisa Boarman, Facilitator/Counselor, School Counseling, said there is peer mediation in every high school.

Ms. Sigaty asked how staff will evaluate the programs that are in place as to their effectiveness. Mr. Glascock responded that the current climate survey that was administered in the spring contains questions that relate to student behaviors. Staff identified and flagged those particular items. In an analysis of the climate data, schools can look at patterns of responses from that data such as office referrals and suspension data. Mrs. Wise said staff is in the process of revising the disciplinary referral form so staff will be able to monitor these types of offenses.

Mrs. Mikulis asked how this will be incorporated into the curriculum. Mr. Glascock said staff is working on creating a climate of mutual respect and trust which connects to core values in the curriculum. Mrs. Mikulis asked, assuming this is implemented, if there would be an annual report update. Mrs. Erickson said this will be integrated into the system as part of the Bridge to Excellence, and it will be reported as Goal 2.

### **Health Issues**

*Presenter:* Mrs. Pam Blackwell.

Mrs. Blackwell reported on the system's response to five major health-related topics. She reported on steps taken by local schools to check student immunization records and contact parents about the new immunization requirements for students in prekindergarten through ninth grade, which go into effect September 1, 2006.

She reported on the CPR/First Aid Grant Project, which provides for school staff to be certified in first aid and CPR. In addition, legislation, effective July 1, requires local Boards of Education to develop and implement an Automated External Defibrillator Program for each high school. Planning is underway to implement both these initiatives. Mrs. Blackwell also noted that the HCPSS and the Howard County Health Department are investigating the feasibility of offering school-based flu mist vaccination clinics for elementary school students and that committees have been formed to plan the school system's response and recovery efforts should the threat of a pandemic flu materialize.

### *Discussion:*

Ms. Gordon asked if a child is excluded from school because they do not have the required immunization, is the family referred to Department of Health. Ms. Heller said procedures are in place for students to have the proper immunization with minimum exclusion from school.

Mrs. Mikulis asked how much the training will cost for the AED program. Ms. Heller said she was not sure but the cost may be in the training of staff after hours or workshop wages. Dr. Cousin added that the Fire and Rescue Department has volunteered to work out the training.

Mrs. Watson discussed the implications if schools are closed due to a pandemic flu. Mr. Glascock responded that depending on the level of response, delivering packages of materials, using the school's website, public libraries, and linking in strategies and content outlines for parents to use will be in place.

Ms. Sigaty asked how successful piloting clinics have been in reaching families. Mrs. Blackwell said it has not been as successful as staff hoped.

### **Quarterly Agenda**

Board members discussed several changes to the quarterly agenda.

*Action:* Mrs. Watson moved approval of the Quarterly Agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the Board 5-0.

### **Bridge To Excellence - Family and Community Involvement**

*Presenter:* Mrs. Diane Martin, Director; Student, Family and Community Services.

Mrs. Martin introduced a Bridge to Excellence Report on involving and engaging families and the community in student achievement. She noted that education is a shared responsibility and depends on strong connections between the home, the school, and the community.

The school system's approach is based on Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, six types of involvement:

- Parenting.
- Communicating.
- Volunteering.
- Learning at Home.
- Decision making.
- Collaborating with the community.

Mrs. Martin introduced the following staff members and community members who reported the success of various outreach efforts.

- Ms. Linda Hawthorne, Title 1 Teacher, Bryant Woods ES.
  - Talked about learning at home and parenting.
- Ms. Deborah West, Parent Liaison, Bryant Woods ES.
  - Organized parents within the outreach office.
- Ms. Robin Dudley, Parent.
  - Students participated in the community-based learning center.

- Ms. Deborah Espitia, Coordinator, World Languages/ESOL.
  - Parents learn how to navigate the school system.
- Song Cha Ho (videotaped) Parent, Patapsco MS.
  - Learned how to ask questions and prepare for parent-teacher conference.
- Seon Yun Choi, PACE (Parent and Child ESOL Program) Participant and Parent.
  - PACE course helped her to learn English, which prepared her to be more involved in her children's education.
- Mr. Pat Saunderson, Principal, Marriotts Ridge HS.
  - Spoke about the different opportunities Marriotts Ridge HS offered to students and families to help with transition to high school.

*Discussion:*

Mr. Kaufman thanked Mrs. West for the reading night at Bryant Woods ES. He also recognized the International Parent Leadership Program, which is leading the school system into being a world class organization.

Ms. Gordon asked how the career and technology education program works in a one-to-one session. Mr. Glascock responded that, as part of the orientation registration process, there is a counseling session with the student to focus on long-term career goals and future direction.

Ms. Sigaty noted that Deep Run ES has a good program which involves students and community. She questioned how students are assessed who do not have technology. Mrs. Martin said the schools send out newsletters and make calls to parents. Parent liaisons call home to let parents know about meetings, report cards.

**Recess:** The Chairman recessed the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

**Public Forum**

Mr. Damani Ingram, parent, spoke in opposition to proposed Policies 2050, 2911, and 13111. He feels the school system is straying away from the fundamental principles of racial, ethnic, religious, and political tolerance. He urges the Board to vote against the new policies.

Mrs. Linda Turner, parent, said she is speaking for her child with a learning disability. She feels her child did not have an advantageous school year and is not working at her potential. Also, she feels her communication attempts are not being responded to.

Ms. Ann DeLacy, President, Howard County Education Association, representing over 4300 members, stated her support of the Board's policy in recognizing the diversity of religious traditions of staff and students. Members respect religious participation and are

committed to providing reasonable accommodation for religious participation. Ms. DeLacy requested that HCEA representatives be included on the specifics of implementation of this policy.

Ms. Alisa Metzger and Ms. Caira Thomas, students, Cradlerock, spoke about a research project involving a structure in the woods. With investigation they found the land was owned by the original Dorsey family, and the structure actually was a springhouse which was used for early refrigeration. The students were aided in their investigation by the Columbia Archives, the Howard County Historical Society, and other groups. Mr. Frank Dorsey, descendent, spoke about his involvement with the students in this project.

### **Policy 2331 - Field Trips and Student Activity Trips, and Policy - 2332 Foreign Travel**

*Presenters:* Mr. Earl Slacum, Elementary Director; and Mr. Daniel Michaels, Secondary Director.

Mr. Slacum noted that a section was added under the definition of walking field trips.

Ms. Gordon asked if there is trip insurance. Mr. Michaels responded that trip insurance on foreign travel trips is encouraged, although, certain security concerns may not be covered under insurance. Parents are informed of the risks of possible money loss/refund.

*Action:* Mrs. Watson moved approval of Policy 2331 and Policy 2332. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the Board 5-0. Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

### **Policy 2050 – Attendance**

*Presenters:* Mrs. Min Kim, Coordinator, Equity Assurance/Human Relations; Mrs. Susan Mascaro; and Mrs. Pam Blackwell.

Ms. Sigaty expressed concern about a recommendation regarding implementation procedures. Mrs. Mascaro said staff was asked to put forth a proposal for consideration to align religious observance with attendance. Mrs. Erickson added that this has not been put forward as a recommendation at this time. Ms. Sigaty asked if a student is denied credit, can the student appeal to the Board. Mrs. Erickson said they will ask for clarification from legal counsel.

*Action:* Mrs. Watson moved approval of Policy 2050 Attendance. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the Board 5-0. Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

**Work Session**

Policy 2911 – Religion and Religious Materials

**Work Session**

Policy 13111 – Religious Observances

Among areas of interest Board members raised are:

- Time away from class.
- Observation of a moment of silence – optional decision.
- Impact on early dismissals, scheduling exams, makeup work.
- Guidelines for implementation.
- Recording the absence may be problematic.
- Are teachers being asked to do more than the occasional excused absence.
- Arranging student schedules to accommodate time away from class.

Mrs. Watson noted that there were still questions to be answered and suggested tabling this policy until all the answers are satisfied. Mrs. Erickson agreed that staff would welcome the time to study the issues in more depth. Mr. Kaufman added that all the religions need to be addressed.

Mrs. Watson proposed that Dr. Cousin and Mrs. Erickson come back to the Board with a timeline and allow all of members to make an informed decision. This will also allow time for input from the public.

**Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mrs. Ellen Giles, President.

Mrs. Giles talked about recent activities CAC has been involved in. She noted that members have been able to take an active role in many areas, and members serve as a broad resource. She added that communication is vital to the community.

**Adjournment:** The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.