

# **Summary of the Board of Education Meeting**

## **Thursday, March 23, 2006**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Approved a consent agenda including a school bus contract transfer, bids and contracts, donations and the minutes of Board of Education meetings.
- Approved Board positions on education-related legislation under consideration by the 2006 Maryland General Assembly.
- Appointed four members to the Board of Directors of the Education Foundation (see: "Board Names First Members to Foundation Board").
- Approved the Board's tentative quarterly agenda for April-June 2006.
- Approved Policy 9521, Wellness through Nutrition and Physical Activity (see: "Wellness Policy Sets Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards").

### **Steps Taken to Address Issues with SMS**

For his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin called on Assistant Superintendent Bob Glascock to provide an update on the implementation of the Student Information Management System (SMS). Glascock reported that he is providing weekly updates to the Superintendent regarding SMS and that he and his staff have ongoing communication with school-based staff.

At the high school level, Glascock said his staff is talking directly with data clerks and registrars to find out exactly what they are experiencing. Data clerks and registrars are being compensated for the extra time they have worked during the SMS implementation. Two and a half technology positions have been added to more aggressively address issues at the schools on a daily basis. Currently, SMS is being used on a limited basis in middle and elementary schools.

Glascock reported that he and members of his staff recently met with the corporate level staff at Chancery, including the Chief Executive Officer and software developers. The Howard County Public School System was joined by other school systems from around the country that are using the SMS program developed by Chancery. Glascock indicated that the school system did not pay for the software program, but paid a set fee for service from Chancery. He noted that it is not unusual for a school system to experience these types of issues as a generic program is tailored to the individual system needs. A student information management system from any vendor would require extensive customization.

This month, an outside vendor is completing an analysis of our network and information loads, and creating network architectural maps. Additionally, adjustments are being made to the system's servers to ensure that they are aligned with the program. Currently staff is running tests on third and fourth quarter report card preparation, using placeholder grades and running them through the system to identify any problems in advance of the actual report card run. Within the next three weeks, Glascock hopes to have a decision regarding how the school system will proceed next year.

### **Wellness Policy Sets Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards**

After a lengthy process of public hearings and revisions, the Board approved Policy 9521, Wellness through Nutrition and Physical Activity, with minor changes. The policy, which goes into effect on July 1, sets food and beverage standards for the school day and addresses options for physical activity.

In approving the policy, the Board disallowed the sale of iced tea and sports drinks in school cafeterias during the school day, but permitted vending machines selling only water to operate at all times. Sodas may be offered after the end of the school day and at the secondary level only, and may constitute no more than 50 percent of the vending machine selections. Breads, cakes, cookies and brownies prepared in private homes and unlicensed facilities are allowed after the end of the last lunch period as long as they are not cream filled.

The policy calls for staff to receive resources, guidance, and professional development on ways to incorporate physical activity within the school day. Elementary schools are required to provide daily recess and staff is encouraged to limit the use of recess as a time to administer discipline or as a time for students to make up work. At the middle school level, each school will provide an intramural program and, time permitting, provide an opportunity for supervised physical activity during lunch periods. Each high school must provide a comprehensive interscholastic athletic program.

### **Three Policies Revised, New Policy on Search and Seizure Proposed**

The Board received reports on recently completed revisions to three policies, a new policy on search and seizure, and changes to the Code of Conduct.

Policy 10200, Student Representation, has been revised to establish the term of the student member to the Board, clarify that the student member does not attend closed or quasi-judicial sessions of the Board, incorporate middle school Student Councils into the Howard County Association of Student Councils, and define student voters as students in Grades 6-11. The revisions include flexible language related to voting guidelines for the student member, which allows for limited voting rights in accordance with Maryland statute if legislation is enacted. If legislation is not enacted, the policy clarifies guidelines for opinion votes.

Language currently included in the Students' Responsibilities and Rights Policy, has been pulled to create a new Policy 3443 on the Search and Seizure of Students. The new policy was developed to address legal and implementation issues in greater detail and to increase awareness of the provisions related to search and seizure in the school setting.

Policy 3431, Discipline, has been revised to include the components of due process, establish the expectation that staff will receive training in the provisions of the policy as well as prevention and intervention techniques, and provide staff with direction in the reporting and recording of disciplinary information.

Revisions to Policy 3441, Students' Responsibilities and Rights, include the addition of standard definitions, information related to grievances and appeals, a safe and nurturing environment as a right, and standards related to the dissemination of the policy to students.

Staff also reported that the Student Code of Conduct has been revised to align with the policy revisions. The Code now defines plagiarism, bullying, and tardiness.

The Board will set aside time during the evening session of the April 6 Board meeting to present questions to staff concerning the policies. The Board also discussed moving the public hearings to the evening of April 25, depending on the length of the evening agenda of the April 27 meeting.

### **Budget Committee Debriefs**

Ellen Giles, who chaired the Board's Budget Committee, presented feedback on the budget review process. Giles reported that committee members felt the timeframe for review was too compressed. The basic orientation for new members cuts into time for the review.

She recommended that membership on the committee should be two consecutive years and that the committee should work with a board finance committee when it is established. The committee would like to begin earlier, perhaps in September, and meet with the Superintendent regarding how the budget is built.

She also suggested that the committee be used in an outreach capacity such as testifying before the county, preparing reports, and communicating the budget to the community. Committee members thanked Ellen Giles and Bob Glascock for their tremendous contributions to the work of the committee.

### **Public Hearings on Policies**

Veronika Carella and Bob Rosenberg, representing PTA Council, testified at the hearing on Policy 3412, Trespassing or Willful Disturbance. They requested that the Board ensure that the civil rights of students and parents are protected. They suggested that thresholds be established to ensure that students and parents not be treated the same way in which a stranger on campus might be treated. They testified that checks and balances are needed to ensure that the policy is not abused, and that a clear and fair method of appeal be included.

No one spoke at the public hearing Policy 2211, Selection of Instructional Materials.

### **System Identifies Measures for Goal 2**

The Howard County Public School System has identified two goals to support its mission. Goal 1 focuses on the academic achievement of students and Goal 2 focuses on the safe and nurturing environment essential for personal success. In an effort to evaluate performance relative to Goal 2, three key indicators have been identified.

Average Daily Attendance: 100 percent of all schools will meet the standard of satisfactory (94 percent to 95.9 percent) or excellent (96 percent or greater).

Safe Student Behavior: 100 percent of all school will have two percent or less of students demonstrating unsafe behavior, which is defined as discipline or suspension for weapons, arson, physical attacks, drug use, drug possession, or drug distribution.

Safe and Nurturing Environment: Baseline data will be collected this spring through surveys of parents, students and staff.

### **PBIS Promotes Positive Student Behavior**

Pam Blackwell introduced a report on a process called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) that the school system is using to create safer and more effective schools. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students. PBIS training shows educators how to create and sustain school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve lifestyle results for all children by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and appropriate behavior more desirable. In a PBIS school,

- Students can describe behavioral expectations
- More time is available for instruction
- Evidence-based practices are used
- Function-based behavior supports exist
- Data and team-based action planning occurs
- Administrators are active participants
- Definitions and procedures for handling violations agreed upon
- Discipline data is reviewed regularly
- A continuum of support is available to all students

Howard County had nine active PBIS schools in 2004-05 school years. Guilford Elementary, Laurel Woods Elementary, and Murray Hill Middle were awarded exemplar school status in 2004-05. Staff from Laurel Woods Elementary, Murray Hill Middle, and Howard High reported on the successes they have experienced as a result of the PBIS program.

### **Board Names First Members to Foundation Board**

The Board approved four individuals to serve on the newly established Board of Directors of the Howard County Public Schools Educational Foundation. Members include Cathy Bell, President of Brdancat Enterprise, Inc.; Doug Hostetler, Owner, Hostetler Church, LLC; Felicita Sola-Carter, Assistant Deputy Commissioner Human Resources, Social Security Administration; and Richard Talkin, Attorney.

### **In Other Action...**

The Board set dates for a meeting with the NAACP and an evidentiary hearing.

At Public Forum, Linda Turner commented on the need for educators to respect parents. Jean Evans, with the Council of Elders, urged the Board to increase the budget so that Academic Mentors can be hired through Black Student Achievement Program.

Ellen Giles, Chairman of the Citizen Advisory Committee, reported on the recent activities of the committee.

**The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, 2006.**