

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, April 27, 2006

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved a consent agenda including bids and contracts, appointment of summer school principals, SB894 Certification, categorical transfer of FY 2006 Operating Budget, FY 2006 Capital Budget Transfer and the minutes of Board of Education meetings.
- Approved the appointment of Tom Miller as Executive Director of Instruction and Business Technology, and Dr. Jose Stevenson as Director of Information Technology.
- Approved a proclamation designating May 1-5, 2006 as School Pupil Personnel Worker Week in the HCPSS.
- Approved a proclamation designating May 2006 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month in the HCPSS.
- Approved the name Dayton Oaks for the new western elementary school.
- Designated HCAA as the bargaining unit for the Athletics and Activities Manager position.
- Amended Policy 1001, Policy Development and Adoption, to change the review period to a six-year cycle, and minor language changes, effective July 1, 2006.

Schools receive new computers; plans for SIMS

Assistant Superintendent Bob Glascock began his status report by thanking all those who were involved in the recent upgrade of instructional technology across the school system. In only 50 days, staff

- 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 the Student Information Management System, 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, we have decided to continue to implement SIMS next year, but offer schools the option of using a tool, grade transporter, to generate local reports.

Glascock indicated that the school system also must evaluate the extent to which the Chancery product meets the technical and operational requirements of our Student Information Management System and that he plans to do so through an independent third-party assessment. This analysis will allow the system to make a well-informed decision about the future development of our overall K-12 SIMS.

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, Assistant Superintendent Linda Wise reported on the steps that the 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.

Board looks at \$3.6 million cut to operating request; \$14.6 million in capital budget

Superintendent Sydney Cousin presented a proposed cut list that would reduce the Board's FY07 Operating Budget Request by \$3.6 million to meet the funding level recommended by the County Executive. The list of potential reductions includes 2 new guidance counselor positions, a .5 new 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 08 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 FY06 year-end funds could be used to pay a portion of next year's health insurance costs.

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 million for Old Cedar lane addition/renovation; and \$3.6 million to fund the Clarksville Middle School renovation.

Staff was encouraged to attend the County Council Public Hearing on the education budget on Saturday, May 6 at 9:00 a.m.

Eight schools scheduled to receive relocatable classrooms

In a report on the 2006-07 assignments of relocatable classrooms, Coordinator of School Planning David Drown recommended that eight schools receive units. If the Board approves the recommendations, one old unit would be removed from Clemens Crossing Elementary and two new units would be added. Bryant Woods and Swansfield elementary schools would receive one unit each. One unit would be removed from Pointers Run and two units would be removed from both Clarksville and Triadelphia Ridge.

At the middle school level, Drown recommends adding one unit to Clarksville, two units each to Ellicott Mills, Glenwood, Hammond, and Murray Hill. Mount View would receive three units and three units would be removed from Patapsco. Seven units would be removed from high schools—five from Howard and two from Long Reach.

Board Considers Changes to Religion Policies

Director of Staff Relations Sue Mascaro and Director of Equity Assurance Min Kim presented proposed revisions to Policy 2911, Religion and Religious Materials, and Policy 13111, Religious Observances. The policy on religion and religious materials in schools has been revised to include definitions of religion and proselytizing; and includes new standards for guest speakers and baccalaureate ceremonies. The proposed policy on religious observances includes definitions of religious holiday and religious observances. New standards set direction for student absence for religious holidays, the essential curriculum, religious clubs, prayer during non-instructional time, religious attire, baccalaureate ceremonies, period of silence, and annual parent and student notification. The public hearings on the two policies will be held on May 23.

On another policy, Secondary Administrative Director David Bruzga presented the third version of revised Policy 3443, Students' Responsibilities and Rights. A report was first brought to the Board on March 23. Additional time for Board input was scheduled for April 6. At the Board's direction, the proposal has been revised. The public hearing on the revisions will be held on May 11, with action scheduled for May 25.

Public Hearings Draw Public Comment

At the hearing on Policy 10200, Student Representation, Student Member on the Montgomery County Board of Education Sabastian Johnson read a letter from the Chairman of the Montgomery County Board in support of partial voting rights for the Howard County student board member. Ellen Giles testified that she was pleased to see a more rigorous election process and questioned the exclusion of the student member from a vote on redistricting.

At the hearing on Policy 3443, Student Search and Seizure, Ellen Giles commented that the Citizen's Advisory Committee would submit comments on this policy in writing.

The hearing on Policy 3431, Discipline/Code of Conduct, drew no public comment.

In other action...

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin shared information about his recent surprise visits to a number of schools to recognize the recipients of the various awards for outstanding performance. He also attended the recent PC Olympics at the Applications and Research Lab, which was sponsored by the Lazarus Foundation. He called on Assistant Superintendent's Bob Glascock and Linda Wise to provide updates on technology and the implementation of SIMS.

Government, Business, and Community Relations Officer Roger Plunkett presented a summary of the bills passed by the 2006 Maryland General Assembly.

At Public Forum, parent Linda Turner addressed the Board with concerns about the nature of the accommodations made for her daughter during testing.

Ellen Giles, chairman of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, congratulated the Board on the middle school foreign language program as represented at the recent It's Linguistic competition.

Ann Dulacy, President of the Howard County Education Association, presented the results of this year's HCEA Satisfaction Survey.

The Board set dates for two paper appeals.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2006.