

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, May 11, 2006

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved a consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, appointment of the local impact aid representative, donations, and minutes of Board meetings; and received monthly reports on the operating budget and the school construction fund.
- Approved the assignment of relocatable classrooms, with the addition of one unit at Glenelg High School.
- Approved new course proposals, Preparing for Standardized Assessments and Intermediate Topics in Algebra/Geometry, for 2006-07.
- Approved the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Chart (see: "Board issues warning regarding APFO chart").
- Approved revisions to Policy 3431, Discipline and the Code of Conduct.
- Approved new Policy 3443, Student Search and Seizure.
- Approved revisions to Policy 10200, Student Representation.
- Scheduled a Board work session on the fiscal year 2007 budgets for May 18, 2006 at 10 a.m.

Opening and closing times change for two schools

School opening and closing times will remain the same for next year, with two exceptions. Phelps Luck Elementary's schedule will be five minutes earlier from 8:45 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. West Friendship Elementary's schedule will be five minutes earlier, opening at 9:25 a.m. and closing at 3:55 p.m. The schedule for the new Dayton Oaks Elementary School will be 9:00 a.m. through 3:30 p.m.

Board issues warning regarding APFO chart

In approving the open and closed chart for the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the Board asked staff to alert the County Office of Planning and Zoning to pending decisions on capital projects that may require changes to the APFO chart. The Board is currently studying the feasibility of additions to several western elementary schools. Should the additions prove infeasible, a West Friendship Elementary replacement school would be required. This would necessitate changes to the open and closed chart.

Board receives reports on attendance, field trips/foreign travel study policies

Administrative Directors Dave Bruzga and Earl Slacum reported on proposed changes to Policy 2331, Field Trips/Foreign Travel Study. Information on foreign travel has been removed from Policy 2331 and included in a separate policy, 2332. New guidelines ensure that field trips and foreign travel trips are related to system goals. Definitions were clarified in both policies and approval processes and parameters for trips were refined. A public hearing on the policy changes is scheduled for June 8.

Pam Blackwell, Director of Student Services, provided the Board with a summary of proposed changes to Policy 2050, Attendance. The revisions clarify aspects of the existing policy and align the policy with proposed changes to policies on religious

observances and religious materials. A public hearing on the revised policy is scheduled for June 8.

Students suggest ways to save money; fund capital needs

At a public hearing on reductions to the Board's fiscal 2007 budget, students from Clarksville Middle School gave presentations in support of needed renovations to their school, and on ways to fund renovations through energy savings. On different topic, School Psychologist Nancy Enders asked the Board to consider the impact of the loss of the 0.5 psychologist position from next year's operating budget.

In other action...

Superintendent Sydney Cousin reported on the annual Service Awards Reception, where recipients of HCPSS Excellence Awards were recognized and employees were honored for 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service. He also thanked parents, administrators, teachers and other staff members who attended the County Council Public Hearing on the education budget on May 6. In addition he thanked teacher Madge Johnson for inviting him to give a baking demonstration for her Culinary Arts Class at Reservoir High School, where he prepared his recipe for cold oven pound cake.

At Public Forum, Bob Moon and Jud Malone, representing the Thunder Hill Park Alliance, asked the Board to support plans for a nature park on the Smith Property in east Columbia.

Parent James Robertson asked the comments about the curriculum; students are not getting mathematics instruction every day, they do not need reading and English every day, students cannot place historic events in context, students do not get enough physical education, middle schools have no sports programs, and too many days off during the year.

Mt. Hebron High Student Government President Jenna Frey asked that the Board allow student government members to wear stoles on stage during high school graduation. Currently only academic clubs are recognized at graduation with pins and/or stoles.

Parent Linda Turner addressed the need to have consistent incident reports, encourage parental involvement, and access to records particularly assessments.

Ellen Giles brought to the Board's attention the recent performance of Howard County students at a local Robotics Competition.

In an appointment before the Board, PTA Council President Mary Jane Grauso asked the Board to reconsider the backpack dissemination procedure because of the demands being made on local PTAs. She reported that PTA Council has also sent a letter to the Superintendent with questions about the Student Information Management System.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2006.