

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

March 8, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, March 8, 2007, 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:

Diane Mikulis, Chairman
Frank Aquino, Vice Chairman
Lawrence Cohen
Sandra French
Ellen Giles
Patricia Gordon
Janet Siddiqui (sworn in at 4:10 p.m.)
Wossen Ayele, Student Member

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:03 p.m., and Mr. Ayele led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Swearing In of Janet Siddiqui, M.D. – New Board Member

Dr. Janet Siddiqui was sworn in as a member of the Board of Education by Mr. Wayne Robey, Deputy Clerk of the Court. Dr. Siddiqui was appointed by County Executive Ken Ulman to fill a vacancy that resulted from Ms. Mary Kay Sigaty's election to the County Council.

Dr. Siddiqui expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as a Board member and indicated her readiness to move forward on issues of health and wellness; bridging the achievement gap; and bringing the home, community, and school together to work on issues and build consensus.

Mr. Ken Ulman, County Executive, congratulated Dr. Siddiqui and her family and spoke about the importance of the school system to the community. He also expressed appreciation to the Board, Superintendent, and staff for their contributions to HCPSS and stated that he looks forward to a close working relationship.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Approval of the Agenda

Delete: Item VIII.D. – School Construction Monthly Reports

Action: Mrs. Giles moved approval of the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aquino and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin reported on his attendance at the Choose Civility Seminar and his latest Candid Conversations session at Glenelg HS. He reported that nearly 150 interviews were held recently with Professional Development School (PDS) interns and student teachers. On March 2, Dr. Cousin read to fifth graders at Phelps Luck ES. He congratulated Student Board Member Wossen Ayele, BSAP Specialist Patricia Branner-Pierce, and the Mt. Hebron HS Organization of Parents of African-American Students for receiving Achievement for Maryland's Minority Students Awards.

Student Member's Report

Mr. Ayele reported that the Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC) is preparing for the March 22 luncheon with the Board, at which each high school will honor their selection of 2007 Teacher of the Year. He also expressed appreciation to the Superintendent and the Board for actively involving students in decisions and providing opportunities for students to serve on committees and attend school system events.

Student Representative Report

Mr. Rushi Tilati, River Hill HS Representative, along with Ms. Katerina Wright, Student Government Association (SGA) President, reported on various school events, a restructuring of the SGA, and the implementation of school club charters to monitor student activities.

Board Members' Reports

Board members reported on the recent activities of committees on which they serve. Mrs. Gordon reported on the MABE Board of Directors Meeting, which she and Mrs. Mikulis attended; Mr. Aquino on the Spending Affordability Committee; and Mr. Cohen on the Federal Relations Network.

Consent Agenda

Staff Personnel; Bids and Contracts; Operating Budget Monthly Report; Veterans ES Easement; Donations; and Minutes of January 25 (Regular Meeting), February 1 (Public Hearing on FY 2008 Operating Budget), February 6 (Public Work Session I on FY 2008 Operating Budget), February 23 (Quarterly Meeting with County Council), and February 27, 2007 (Adoption of FY 2008 Operating and Capital Budgets).

The Veterans ES Easement item was pulled for discussion, and approval of the minutes was deferred until the evening session.

Action: Mr. Aquino moved approval of the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Staff Personnel – Approved by the Board.

Resignations

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Reason	Years in Howard County	Effective Date
Burchfiel, James	SJES	Elem. Ed.	Personal	2.0	6/14/07
Petty, Margaret	Fr. Leave	ESOL	Personal	4.0	2/28/07
Smallwood, Jacelyn	SJES	ESOL	Family Obligations	1.6	2/12/07

Contracts

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Place of Last Teaching Assignment	Grade/Step	Effective Date
Craig, Kymberly	MHMS	SPE	Private School	D-08	02/06/07
Curry, David	LRHS	SST	--	B-01	01/25/07
Eltzroth, Zakariah	ELMS	RDG	--	A-01	01/10/07
Hedrick, Jennifer	IES/DMS	WLA	--	A-03	01/31/07
Knauss, Lindsey	CO	PSY	--	B-01	08/20/07
Meshbesh, Nicole	CO	PSY	Anne Arundel	B-02	02/22/07
Morisco, Sherri	FQMS	SCI	--	A-01	02/12/07
Poss, Tiffani	PLES	ECE	--	A-01	01/22/07
Schroeder, Elisabeth	AHS	SPE (K-12)	Evanston, IL	C-14	01/31/07
Slagle, Randall	GMS	TE	Johns Hopkins APL	C-06	01/29/07
Tayman, Elizabeth	CRS	ELE	--	A-01	02/01/07

Leaves of Absence

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Years in Howard County	Effective Date
Weitzel, Jennifer	PRES	Elem. Ed	5.6	2/23/07

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-1	Classroom Paper & Supplies	
	Competitive Edge	\$ 39.75
	Windtree Enterprises	191.55
	The Paper People	237.00
	Office Max	1,455.00
	National Art & School Supply	4,925.00
	Standard Stationary Supply Co.	20,143.50
	Pyramid School Products	40,087.50
	Integrity School Supplies	<u>64,152.59</u>
	TOTAL	\$137,231.89
P-2	Chiller Maintenance and On-Call Service	
	Boland Trane	\$ 43,825

Clarksville ES – Addition & Improvements: Contract packages 1A – General Construction; 15A – Mechanical, and 16A – Electrical in the total award amount of \$2,071,100.

Operating Budget Monthly Report – Accepted by the Board.Donations – Approved by the Board.

Burleigh Manor Middle: Marcy and John Schveibinz, in the amount of \$1000, (\$500) designated for the Media Center, and (\$500) designated for the Band Program.

Atholton High: Boosters, in the amount of \$1200, designated for the purchase of girls' lacrosse sweatsuits.

Centennial High: Marcy and John Schveibinz, in the amount of \$1000, (\$500) designated for the purchase of media books and computer equipment, and (\$500) designated for the purchase of music.

Boosters, in the amount of \$990, (\$480) designated for the Frisbee Club, and (\$510) for the Biology Club.

Meredith Ward, in the amount of \$1000, designated for the J. M. Ward Scholarship Fund.

Glenelg High: Boosters, in the amount of \$7750, (\$5000) designated for the After Prom Party, and (\$2750) designated for the SAT Prep Class.

Deborah Babcock, in the amount of \$1000, designated for dance costumes.

Howard High: SVB Foundation, Inc., in the amount of \$1000, designated for the purchase of weight room equipment.

Long Reach High: Baltimore Post of The Society of American Military Engineers, in the amount of \$1300, designated for the Robotics Club.

Honeywell Technology Solutions, Inc., in the amount of \$3000, designated for the Rocketry Club.

Boosters, in the amount of \$3500, (\$2000) designated for the purchase of boys and girls track team uniforms, (\$1000) designated for the purchase of cheerleading uniforms, and (\$500) for the purchase of uniforms for the boys' lacrosse team.

Mt. Hebron High: Charles Wise, in the amount of \$500, designated for the purchase of band uniforms.

David Strobel, M.D., in the amount of \$1000, designated for the purchase of band uniforms.

Timothy Holmes, in the amount of \$1000, designated for the purchase of band uniforms.

Boosters, in the amount of \$6850, (\$5850) designated for the purchase of a sound system for the stadium, (\$300) designated for trip expenses to a D.C. competition, and (\$700) designated for the purchase of baseball game jerseys.

Reservoir High: Raytheon Solypsis, in the amount of \$13,500, designated to fund Project Community Retreat.

PTSA, in the amount of \$4237.12, designated for the purchase of agenda books, a guest speaker and recognition of student achievement.

Wilde Lake High: Howard County Office on Aging, in the amount of \$1000, designated to support both PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention System) and ROAR (Respect, Opportunity, Attendance, Responsibility) which are behavior intervention programs.

Veterans ES Easement

Mr. Ray Brown explained that the county has requested that the school system grant this easement to a homeowner due to the plan to eliminate access to Montgomery Road from the property. This easement is required as part of the site approval process.

Action: Ms. Gordon moved approval of the recommendation that the easement agreement with Gannika Edwards be approved and that the Board of Education further authorize the Superintendent to take all the necessary action to finish construction of the private access road and obtain final approval for its use. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Proclamation: Music in Our Schools Month

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
PROCLAMATION
DESIGNATING
MARCH 2007 AS
MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS MONTH

WHEREAS, the *No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001* identifies music as a core subject and a challenging subject in which all students should demonstrate competency; and

WHEREAS, music performance, comprehension, composition, and aesthetic criticism is embedded in the Voluntary State Curriculum and Essential Learner Outcomes for all students in the State of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, the curriculum of the Howard County Public Schools requires sequential, comprehensive and rigorous study of music for all students; and

WHEREAS, music provides a universal language for the expression of ideas and the emotions of the human spirit and, at the same time, provides a unique means of understanding the diversity of cultures; and

WHEREAS, the study of music connects students to our history, traditions, and heritage; and

WHEREAS, music education effectively equips students with the higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity, and other habits of mind that are increasingly critical to their success in learning and in life; and

WHEREAS, our community's music and other arts organizations and resources are important partners for our music teachers and schools; and

WHEREAS, the National Association for Music Education has established Music In Our Schools Month to underscore the importance of music education, to acknowledge the contributions of music educators and to celebrate the musical accomplishments of students;

THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Board of Education designates March 2007 as Music in Our Schools Month in the Howard County Public School System; and

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that the Board of Education supports the study and performance of music as essential to a well educated, cultured society and most importantly as a means to nourish the human spirit.

Diane Mikulis, Chairman
Board of Education of Howard County

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent
Howard Co. Public School System

Motion: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the proclamation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. French.

Board members commented on the significant influence and key to success that music in the schools has had and continues to have on students' lives.

Action: The motion was approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Legislative Report/2007 General Assembly

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

Mr. Plunkett presented 19 bills for discussion and approval by the Board.

Recommended Positions: Oppose

- SB 242 – Education – Multiple Student Suspensions – Services and Actions Required.

Due to a lack of complete information, Mr. Plunkett requested that this bill be held for discussion until the next Board meeting.

- SB 244 – Student Health and Fitness Act of 2007.

Mr. Plunkett explained that historically the Board's position has been that curricular decisions be made by local boards, rather than mandated by legislation. This bill would mandate physical education requirements from kindergarten through grade five. HCPSS

already has a program that far exceeds requirements mandated by the state. It was noted that Dr. Carl Smith, Executive Director of MABE (Maryland Association of Boards of Education), has strongly encouraged local boards to review their physical education, health, and fitness courses and create appropriate programs without the need for legislative mandates. It was also noted that HCPSS is making a very strong effort to include more physical activity for students throughout the school day.

- SB 265 – Building Opportunities for all Students and Teachers (BOAST) in Maryland Tax Credit – Providing a tax credit against the state income tax for contributions made to an eligible educational scholarship organization or an eligible innovative educational grant organization.

No discussion.

- HB 317 – Student Health and Fitness Act of 2007 – Requiring that public school students in kindergarten through grade five be provided a specified minimum level of a program of physical education each week.

Action: Mrs. French moved that the Board oppose SB 244, SB 265, and HB 317. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Recommended Positions: Support

- SB 55 – Budget Bill (FY 2008) – Making proposed appropriations contained in the State Budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, in accordance with Article III, Section 52 of the Maryland Constitution. This bill legislates full funding for the Bridge to Excellence Act and Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI).
- SB 56 – The Creation of a State Debt – Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan of 2007, and the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loans of 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. This bill supports funding for school construction.
- SB 109 & HB 139 – Education – Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) – Funding – Requiring the State to provide grants to specified county boards of education to reflect regional differences in the cost of education that are due to factors outside the control of local jurisdictions. The GCEI is an Integral component of the “Thornton” Commission’s recommendations and essential to achieving the Bridge to Excellence Act’s mandate for adequate funding for all of Maryland’s students by FY 2008.
- SB 225 – Teacher Incentive Act of 2007 – Allowing specified classroom teachers in specified public schools teaching specified subjects to claim an income tax credit of \$1,500. This bill could help with teacher recruitment and retention.

- SB 669 – Education – Public Charter Schools – Revisions – This bill provides greater structure to the development, approval, and accountability for public charter schools and ensures consistency throughout the state.
- HB 475 – Public School Construction Assistance Act of 2007 – Imposing recordation and transfer taxes on the transfer of controlling interest in an entity that owns interests in real property in Maryland that constitute at least 80 percent of the value of the entity's assets and have an aggregate value of at least \$1,000,000. The bill requires specified local recordation tax revenues and specified state transfer tax revenues for FY 2008 through 2011 to be dedicated to public school construction and renovation.
- HB 1132 - Elementary and Secondary Education – Public School Construction – State Funding. This bill would allow the school system to keep funding for projects that were developed under cost.

Action: Mr. Cohen moved that the Board support SB 55, SB 56, SB 109, HB 139, SB 225, SB 669, HB 475, and HB 1132. The motion was seconded by Mrs. French and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Recommended Position: Support

- SB 475 – Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of Requiring Passage of the High School Assessment for Graduation.

Mr. Plunkett stated that MABE has taken a position supporting the development of a taskforce to review recommendations from the state superintendent of schools regarding High School Assessments (HSAs), and the Board has been asked to draft a letter in support of the taskforce.

The Board agreed to discuss a separate piece of legislation tied to HSAs and graduation requirements after further review of the information.

Action: Mrs. French moved that the Board support SB 475. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Recommended Positions: Oppose

- HB 1079 – Education – Collective Bargaining – Public School Labor Relations Board.

This legislation is strongly opposed because the authority and responsibility of local governments and school boards to fund direct operations of public schools must be preserved. To turn over the negotiations process to a state board would take the authority away from local boards.

- SB 241 – Education – Alcohol and Drug Testing for Pupils in Public or Private Schools.

Drug testing has significant implications regarding students' privacy, and the language contains ambiguous language.

- SB 496 – Procurement – Public Schools and Facilities – Preference for Locally Grown Foods.

This bill has the potential to increase costs for the school system.

Recommended Positions: Support

- HB 478, HB 562, HB 962 – Teachers' Retirement and Teachers' Pension System – Reemployment of Retirees.

These bills would enhance the pension system and support the reemployment of retirees as the school system continues to face a critical need for teachers and administrators.

Action: Mr. Aquino moved approval of the recommendation to oppose HB 1079, SB 241, and SB 496 and to approve the recommendation to support HB 478, HB 562, and HB 962. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (7/0). Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Mr. Plunkett noted that the Student Member Voting Rights Bill passed the House of Delegates unanimously with a 135-0 vote and is now moving on to the Senate.

Mt. Hebron HS Renovation – Scope of Project

Presenter: Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management.

Mr. Roey provided the Board with background information on the Mt. Hebron HS renovation project. He also reported on recent maintenance projects at the school.

Mr. Roey noted that Mt. Hebron was originally constructed in 1964 as a high school. In 1999, the ninth-grade addition was added. Since 2004, the science rooms and the auditorium have been renovated. Over the years, 11,454 sq. ft. have been added to the building.

The Board initially put a placeholder of \$18.7 million in the FY 2006 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for additional renovations to Mt. Hebron. In FY 2007, that amount was increased to \$22.5 million due to construction cost escalation. The project cost was increased to \$33.5 million in FY 2008 in response to conceptual input from the Planning Committee. To date, \$1.9 million has been approved.

It was noted that the vast majority of HCPSS schools were built according to older versions of educational specifications, and the important point is whether the program functions satisfactorily within the space assigned. Nonconformance with current educational specifications is not necessarily cause for change or redesign of a building. Mr. Roey noted that it is not economically possible to replace every school as it ages, and Dr. Cousin reminded the Board that the instructional program has been delivered successfully at Mt. Hebron for 40 years.

Ms. Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration, provided information regarding class sizes, various program offerings, and the use of floating teachers in some instances in order to accommodate the needs of students.

Gilbert Architects will conduct a facility assessment survey of Mt. Hebron, Atholton, Centennial, and Hammond high schools, which will result in a rank prioritized listing of long-term investment needs, probably by early May.

Discussion:

Mrs. French expressed concern regarding the continuation of the Emotionally Disturbed (ED) program at Mt. Hebron during renovations, in addition to space and safety issues at the school. She suggested that the ED program be moved during the renovation project, which would also free up additional space to accommodate students during construction.

Regarding issues raised about narrow hallways and smaller classrooms, it was noted that it would not be possible to expand the hallways or increase the size of older classrooms. There may be some opportunities for minor reconfiguration of spaces due to the construction of firewalls. Staff pointed out that there are also other older high schools in Howard County delivering instruction successfully under the same circumstances.

Mr. Roey explained information regarding increased costs associated with the construction of firewalls. He noted that if the renovation takes place within the current footprint of the building, construction of firewalls would not be required. Expansion of the footprint results in the need to bring the building up to current standards and county code requirements for firewalls.

Staff agreed to provide Board members with a list of items that will be addressed related to the feasibility study. In addition, answers to questions raised by the PTSA about concerns at Mt. Hebron will also be provided to the Board within the next week.

The Board will take action on March 22 regarding the staff recommendation to renovate a portion of the building at a cost of \$50 million.

Quarterly Agenda – April – June 2007

The Board reviewed its tentative quarterly agenda for April through June 2007.

Scheduling

There were no items for scheduling.

Recess: The meeting was recessed by the Chairman at 6:27 p.m. and reconvened at 7:33 p.m.

Public Forum

Ms. Colleen Morris presented a slide show highlighting all the positive things educators do.

Ms. Diane Goodridge, Worthington ES Parent, expressed concerns regarding an impending asbestos abatement scheduled for spring break and asked that a schedule be determined that permits asbestos abatement when school buildings are vacated during the summer break.

Appointment – PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC) Monthly Report

Ms. Mary Jane Grauso, PTACHC President, reported that the PTA and the school system will collaboratively celebrate National Healthy Schools Day on April 30 with a condensed School Environmental Team survey in classrooms.

Public Hearing – Policy 3445 – Violence and School SafetyMr. Josh Michael, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Representative

- Commended the committee for adding cyber bullying to the policy.
- Expressed concern that the policy may not adequately address situations in which students are harassed, bullied, defamed, hazed, etc., due to their school affiliations outside of the school setting.

Policy 1501 – Acceptable Use of Computer Technology

Presenters: Mr. Jose Stevenson, Director of Information Technology, and Ms. Julie Wray, Instructional Facilitator.

The revised policy updates definitions and clarifies that the policy applies when personal equipment is connected to the school system network.

Among other things, the revised policy also lists purposes for which school system technology should not be used; provides for termination of technology access and accounts; and reserves the school system's right to access, archive, and disclose certain files under certain conditions. The revisions clarify language regarding the reassignment of hardware and provides for the establishment of hardware and software standards.

Discussion:

Board members discussed the importance of maintaining confidentiality of student records and indicated that a provision for archiving information within the school system's existing services must be determined.

Additional discussion concerned security issues related to the use of the school system's CLC (Collaborative Learning Center) by retirees and employees on extended leave.

The need to include guidelines, responsibilities, and parameters for middle school students regarding appropriate computer usage was also noted.

Mrs. French disagreed with the elimination of the definition of plagiarism and also asked that another standard be added indicating that the school system encourages the use of technology throughout classrooms as an instructional tool.

The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed policy on April 12 and take action on May 10, 2007.

Approval of MinutesMinutes of January 25, February 1, February 6, February 23, and February 27, 2007

Board members made minor changes to the language in the minutes of January 25 and February 1, 2007.

Dr. Siddiqui pointed out that she would abstain from voting because she was not serving on that Board at the time these meetings took place.

Action: Ms. Gordon moved approval of the minutes of January 25, February 1, February 6, February 23, and February 27, 2007, as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Aquino and approved by the members of the Board (6/0/1), with Dr. Siddiqui abstaining. Mr. Ayele supported the motion.

Decoupling High School Assessments (HSAs)

It was noted that the Board has received correspondence from MABE regarding the concept of decoupling HSAs as a graduation requirement. Dr. Cousin stated that this issue would be discussed at the next day's statewide superintendents' meeting. Discussion will include a recommendation to defer the requirement for certain groups of students (special education, students with 504 plans, and certain English language learners) in addition to addressing pending legislation. A recommendation concerning legislation will be provided to the Board, and involvement from PTA Council and CAC was encouraged.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 8:30 p.m.

Information Items:

Food and Nutrition Services Financial Report
Charter for Learning Disability AD/HD Committee