

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
AND
HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL**

June 6, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County and the Howard County Council held a joint quarterly meeting on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, at 8:15 a.m. The meeting was held in the Board Room at the Howard County Department of Education, 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

Present:

Board of Education

Diane B. Mikulis, Chairman
Frank J. Aquino, Vice Chairman
Sandra H. French
Ellen Flynn Giles
Patricia S. Gordon
Janet N. Siddiqui

Howard County Council

Calvin Ball, Chairman
Courtney Watson, Vice Chairman
Greg Fox
Mary Kay Sigaty
Jen Terrasa (arrived 8:45 a.m.)

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent
Sandra J. Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Raymond H. Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Mamie J. Perkins, Chief of Staff
Linda Wise, Asst. Supt.-School Administration
Robert Glascock, Asst. Supt.-Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology
Susan S. Shown, Executive Assistant

Sheila Tolliver, Administrator
Jeff Meyers, Legislative Assistant
Haskell Arnold, County Auditor

Mrs. Mikulis called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m. and welcomed the members of the County Council.

Resolving Parents' Issues

Mr. Ball requested direction on how County Council members should advise parents who have a school-related complaint or issue. Mrs. Wise described the process, beginning with parents trying to work out their problem with school-based staff. If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, it can be addressed to central office staff. Parents can also access the Parent Concern Form from the school system's website. Parents should be assured that staff is listening to them and will follow through; however, they still may not be satisfied with the outcome of the issue.

Parents also have the option of contacting the ombudsman's office for assistance in identifying the appropriate process to address their problem. The ombudsman does not try to influence the outcome, but ensures that the parent receives a fair process.

Approved – July 12, 2007

Elementary Technology Positions

Mrs. Erickson explained that the elementary technology education positions would provide the needed technology instruction for students as well as additional planning time for the regular classroom teachers. It is expected that each teacher will receive an extra hour of planning time. Technology teachers will be assigned according to the number of teachers in a school.

Mrs. Mikulis stated that the Board requested funding for full implementation of the initiative, and she thanked the County Executive and the County Council for supporting it.

Ms. Sigaty asked how the technology instruction would affect overall instruction. Mr. Glascock responded that the Administrative Directors would be working throughout the summer with school principals to schedule the technology instruction and integrate it into the subject areas. Dr. Cousin noted that the addition of the technology instruction positions would have no impact on the facilities.

2007 Graduation Ceremonies

Dr. Cousin reported that the graduation ceremonies went very well despite the tight schedule for multiple ceremonies on each day. With the help of the Merriweather Post Pavillion staff and the intervention of the County Executive, all graduations were scheduled.

There were 3,500 Howard County graduates, and there were three graduates from the Cedar Lane School.

Dr. Cousin offered his appreciation to the school system custodial staff who were assigned to Merriweather Post Pavillion, and to the police officers who helped with traffic. He also thanked the members of the County Council for attending the graduation ceremonies.

Invitation for School Visits

Mrs. French informed the members of the County Council that they are always welcome to visit schools, and that Board members would be pleased to accompany them on a school visit.

Mr. Glascock also extended an invitation to the members of the County Council to visit the Curriculum Workshops during the summer.

Mrs. Watson commented that members of the County Council participated in the Mock Congressional Hearings, and it was a wonderful experience. Mrs. Giles noted that staff from other counties and from the Maryland State Department of Education observed the hearings to see how they were run. Mr. Glascock added that Howard County had the highest participation in the state.

High School Facilities Assessment Study

Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director of Facilities, reported that staff expects to receive the Facilities Assessment Study this week, and it will be a very comprehensive document. Staff will review the document and present a report to the Board at its meeting on June 28. A preliminary review of the report does not identify anything that was not anticipated. It does support the need for a dedicated funding source and indicates what will be needed in the future.

Mr. Roey stated that the Facilities Needs Assessment would continue to complete the remaining high schools, followed by the middle schools.

Mrs. Watson asked if similar problems were identified across the four high schools. Mr. Roey responded that the needs are relatively consistent for all four schools, with some needs being unique to each school.

School Bus Transportation Study

Mrs. Mikulis stated that the Study on School Bus Transportation Services was presented to the Board in May 2007; however, there is no staff recommendation at this time.

Mr. David Drown, Director of Pupil Transportation, stated that a staff report and recommendation will be presented to the Board on August 16. (Note: Subsequently changed to September 6, 2007.)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Next meeting: October 10, 2007, 8:15 a.m., George Howard Building.