

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2006

ACTION ITEMS

- Elected Diane Mikulis as Chairman and Frank Aquino as Vice Chairman of the Board for the coming year.
- Approved a consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, Certification of Reporting Requirements under Senate Bill 894, designation of Impact Aid representative, donations, and minutes of Board meetings; and received status reports on the Operating and School Construction Budgets.
- Approved the fiscal year 2006 Audit Report from Clifton Gunderson.
- Approved a resolution endorsing the concept of a truancy court (see: *Plans for truancy court move forward*).
- Approved revised Policy 3611, Student Records and Confidentiality, with amendments (see: *Board approves policy changes*).
- Approved revisions to Policy 1311, Procurement of Materials, Supplies, Equipment and Services to align with Amendment to Education Article 5-112 (see: *Board approves policy changes*).
- Approved the Board's Quarterly Agenda for January-March 2007 as amended.

Bridge to Excellence Progress Report contains good news

Assistant Superintendents Robert Glascock and Linda Wise presented the 2006 Bridge to Excellence Progress Report to the Board and the public. They noted that although the news is outstanding, continuous improvement means the school system never stops striving to be better. Focus on acceleration and talent development has resulted in greater participation in upper level courses.

Highlights of the school system's 2006 Maryland State Assessment performance include:

- Overall, 88 percent of HCPSS students reached proficiency in reading and 84 percent in mathematics.
- ALL elementary schools met our County Standard of 70 percent proficient or above in BOTH reading and mathematics.
- ALL middle schools met our County Standard in reading. In mathematics, 13 middle schools met the County Standard.

On the High School Assessments (HSA), key highlights include:

- Overall, 98 percent of our middle school students who took the HSA passed.
- At 11 middle schools, 100 percent of the students passed the algebra test.
- 85 percent of students required to pass the algebra HSA succeeded.
- 99 percent of students required to pass the biology HSA succeeded.

Principal Pam Akers of Phelps Luck Elementary reported on how her school uses the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) Cycle to improve instruction with such activities as the 11th Day Review, embedded mentoring, and extended week programs. Adrian Kaufman,

principal of Reservoir High School, shared continuous improvement strategies used at Reservoir to support student success on the High School Assessments.

Administrators support additional teacher time in 2007-08 school calendar

At the public hearing on the proposed 2007-08 instructional calendar, Sue Webster, President of the Howard County Administrators Association, spoke in favor of the calendar as proposed, specifically the additional time allotted to address teacher workload and for the articulation day in May. Principals Karen Moore-Robey of Fulton Elementary School, Cheryl Logan of Gorman Crossing Elementary School, and Jonathan Davis of Swansfield Elementary lent their support to the additional teacher work time included in the calendar.

Ann De Lacy, President of the Howard County Education Association, spoke in support of the calendar as proposed and thanked the administrative staff and Board for recognizing the needs of teachers. The Board extended the public comment period to February 11, 2007, when the calendar will be approved.

Plans for truancy court move forward

Business, Community and Government Relations Officer Roger Plunkett and Legal Counsel Mark Blom reported on plans to establish a Truancy Court to assist families in identifying and addressing the underlying causes of the truancy, while maintaining their ability to enforce compliance with conditions spelled out in the disposition of the case. The measure is designed to be a proactive intervention rather than a punitive reaction. Currently, criminal charges are brought against parents. The proposed legislation would provide for civil courts to deal with the students involved.

The Board approved the concept and directed staff to continue collaboration with representatives of the Police Department, the courts, and the Department of Juvenile Service to compose legislation for consideration by the Howard County delegation.

Board approves policy changes

The Board approved revised Policy 3611, Student Records and Confidentiality, with amendments. The revised policy includes additional definitions, additional student rights under FERPA, provides more guidance on the confidentiality of student records, and clarifies that the hearing procedure to amend student records does not address grade changes.

The Board also approved revisions to Policy 1311, Procurement of Materials, Supplies, Equipment, and Services, which increases from \$15,000 to \$25,000 the threshold above which formal advertisements for bids are required.

Policy Specialist Ellen Miller and Public Relations Director Patti Caplan reported on changes to Policy 1211, Citizens Advisory Committees to the Board of Education and the School System; Policy 1221, Citizen's Advisory Committee to the Board of Education; and Policy 11200, Public Hearings. Public hearings on all three policies are scheduled for January 11, 2007 with action set for February 8.

The Board received the Committee Charter for the revision of Policy 4111, School Health Services.

Board receives status report on SMS

Director Jose Stevenson presented the Board with short term and long term plans for the Student Information Management System. He indicated that the priority has been to stabilize, to maintain the system once stabilized, and then make improvements.

The school system will continue to maintain the stability of the student information management systems currently in operation throughout the 2007-08 school year. Staff is beginning to identify the requirements for the future student information management system and an integrated student data distribution and reporting infrastructure that can help schools monitor and analyze student progress, identify goals and actions, and support improvement plans.

In the long term, the intention is to continue to provide support for the identification and implementation of a future student information management system. School officials are also looking to identify, develop and implement a data warehouse to serve as an integrated student data distribution and reporting infrastructure. Stevenson reported that backup systems would be maintained until the new system is fully operational.

In Other Action...

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin congratulated Burleigh Manor Middle School and River Hill High School for being selected at 2007 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence. He also reported that in the *Washington Post* Challenge Index, which is designed to measure the rigor of high school programs, all 11 eligible Howard County high schools were ranked in the top 155 schools in the Washington metro area. Dr. Cousin introduced Student Support Service Director Pam Blackwell, who presented the winners of the Anti-bullying Poster Contest.

At Public Forum, parent Renee Bos asked the Board to look into the learning environment at Cradlerock School. Wilde Lake High School student Damola Adamolekun and Michelle McGrain spoke in support of the speech and debate program and asked for additional funds. Parent Stanley Daniello asked the Board and Superintendent to give principals some accountability for special education. Students Emily Woodhouse and Zach Kashkett thanked the Board for support of the drama programs at each high school.

Mary Jane Grauso, PTA Council President, reported on the recent activities of the PTA. She provided the Board with a report containing data gathered from a parent survey on backpack weight conducted earlier this year. Rose Dennison, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee, reported on recent activities of the committee and invited the Board to attend the CAC meeting on January 14.

The Board discussed cluster assignments, Maryland Association of Boards of Education committee assignments, and Board scheduling.

Deputy Superintendent Sandra Erickson announced the transfer of Robert Bruce from Centennial Lane Elementary to Veterans Elementary; and the promotion of Florence Hu to principal of Centennial Lane Elementary School. She also announced the appointment of Elisa Montalvo as Hispanic Achievement Specialist.

Board auditor John Connors reported on audits of Maryland school districts being conducted by the State of Maryland.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 11, 2007.