

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, February 22, 2007

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved a consent agenda including bids and contracts and the minutes of Board of Education meetings.
- Approved Board of Education positions on education-related legislation under consideration by the 2007 Maryland General Assembly.
- Approved the list of instructional materials for the 2007-2008 school year.
- Approved the recommended policy reorganization, with amendment, and proposed editorial revisions to policies.

Tentative Agreements Reached

Director of Staff Relations Sue Mascaro, chief negotiator for the Board of Education, reported that tentative agreements have been reached with all four bargaining units – HCEA, HCAA, HCEA-ESP and AFSCME.

Academic Interventions Target MS Special Education Students

Staff from the Office of Special Education and three middle school principals reported on initiatives implemented in several middle schools to raise the academic achievement of special education students. A detailed analysis of HCPSS student performance data suggests that, although all student groups have made progress since the first administration of the Maryland School Assessment in 2003, targeted support is needed for the special education group at each instructional level. A comparison between results for elementary and middle school special education students reveals that intensive support and intervention is particularly needed at the middle school level.

Targeted support began at several middle schools in December 2006 with the following initiatives:

- A new Special Education Instructional Support Teacher position
- Additional instructional time through a Core Plus Class
- Scheduling of common planning time
- Professional development for co-teaching teams

Another initiative involves a computer-based assessment tool used with middle school special education students. The Scantron Performance Series efficiently assesses the learning needs of students functioning below grade level and prescribes instruction targeted to the identified needs.

The tool provides reliable testing information that is aligned to the Voluntary State Curriculum. It provides valuable data for parents and general educators and has proven useful in developing IEP objectives.

School officials will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives through the remainder of this year and into next year.

Teacher Recruitment

Human Resources Director Kirk Thompson and Manager Ernesto Diaz reported on system hiring for October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006 in the Annual Hiring and Separation Report. They indicated that 499 teachers were hired from 6,557 applicants – 14 fewer than hired during the same time period last year. Of those hired, 56.3 percent were experienced educators, 106 were student teachers or PDS interns in Howard County, and 20.8 percent were males.

Manager Suzanne Zilber reported that 361 support services employees were hired during this period. This represents an increase over last year's total of 332.

Method for Projecting Enrollment Yields Consistent Estimates

Manager of School Planning Joe Gallihue provided ten years of actual and projected student enrollment data by organizational and county levels. He noted that the error rates by level for this year were no higher than 0.6 percent.

At the school level, error rates for 61 of 70 schools were below 5 percent and only one exceeded 10 percent. Error rates for 2006 compare favorably with those of the past decade and demonstrate that the current projection methodology is a stable model. Enrollment projections are used in developing the capital budget, planning for staffing needs, determining attendance area adjustments, and for compliance with the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

In Other Action...

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin thanked the members of the Technology Advisory Committee for contributing their time and talents to enhance the technology infrastructure of the school system. Dr. Cousin also remarked on recent arrests of three HCPSS teachers for sexual offences and asked that the school system and its 7000 employees not be judged by the actions of three individuals.

Dr. Cousin also recognized the following staff and schools:

- Assistant Superintendent Bob Glascock, who has been selected as a 2007 Outstanding Technology Leader in Education by the Maryland Instructional Computer Coordinators Association.
- Web Master Brian Duvall for making the HCPSS website one of the nation's best public school websites for 2007 as selected by WantToTeach.com.
- Jeannie Prevosto, Athletics and Activities Manager at Mt. Hebron High School, for earning certification as a Master Athletic Administrator through the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.
- Chef instructor Elaine Heilman and her team from the Applications and Research Lab for taking first place in the 2007 Maryland Hospitality Education Foundation's ProStart Student Invitational.
- Oakland Mills Middle School for taking first place in the 2007 Howard County Black Saga Competition.

Rose Dennison, Chairman of the Citizen's Advisory Committee, and Mary Jane Grauso, President of PTA Council of Howard County, reported on the recent activities of their respective organizations.

The Board scheduled several meetings for the Board's calendar.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 8, 2007.