

# **A Summary of the Board of Education Meeting**

## **Thursday, March 8, 2007**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Approved a consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, Veterans Elementary School easement, donations and minutes of Board of Education meetings, and received the monthly operating budget report.
- Approved a Proclamation designating March 2007 as Music In Our Schools Month.
- Approved Board positions on education-related legislation being considered by the 2007 Maryland General Assembly and held SB 242 for discussion at the next Board meeting.
- Voted to support HB 475, which establishes a Task Force on the Policy and Funding Implications of Requiring Passage of the HSA for Graduation.

### **Board Gets Perspective on Mt. Hebron High School Renovation Project**

Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management Ken Roey provided the Board with background information on the Mt. Hebron High School renovation project. He also reported on recent maintenance projects at the school.

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 square feet have been added to the building.

The Board initially put a placeholder of \$18.7 million in the FY 06 Capital Improvement Program for additional renovations to Mt. Hebron. In FY 07 that amount was increased to \$22.5 million due to construction cost escalation. The project cost was increased to \$33.5 million in FY 08 in response to conceptual input from the Planning Committee. To date, \$1.9 million has been approved.

In responding to concerns expressed by the community, Superintendent Sydney Cousin commented that it's not about the facility but whether the program can be delivered in the facility. He reminded the Board that the instruction program has been delivered at Mt. Hebron for 40 years.

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

### **CAC Provides Testimony on Violence and School Safety Policy**

At a hearing on revisions to Policy 3445, Violence and School Safety, Josh Michael testified on behalf of the Citizens Advisory Committee. He commended the committee for adding cyber bullying to the policy but expressed concern that the policy may not adequately address situations in which students are harassed, bullied, defamed or hazed, etc. due to their school affiliation outside of the school setting. The Board is scheduled to take action on the proposed revisions on March 22.

### **Report on Acceptable Use of Computer Technology Policy**

Director of Information Technology Jose Stevenson and Instructional Facilitator Julie Wray reported on the revisions to Policy 1501, Acceptable Use of Computer Technology, and related procedures. 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.

Board members asked questions about data archiving, access to email for employees on leave, and external groups using school computer labs. The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed policy on April 12 and take action on May 10.

### **In Other Action...**

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

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

At Public Forum, Colleen Morris presented a slide show highlighting all the positive things educators do.

During an appointment with the Board, Mary Jane Grauso, President of the PTA Council of Howard County, 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.

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.

**The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 22.**