

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, April 12, 2007

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved a consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, SB984 Certification Letter, donations and minutes of Board of Education meetings; and received monthly reports on the operating budget and the school construction fund.
- Approved a proclamation designating May 7-11, 2007 as Salute to School Food and Nutrition Service Personnel Week in the HCPSS.
- Approved a proclamation designating April 29 through May 4, 2007 as School Psychology Week in the HCPSS.
- Approved a proclamation designating April 23-27, 2007 as Administrative Professionals Week in the HCPSS.
- Approved a proclamation designating May 9, 2007 as School Health Services Day in the HCPSS.
- Approved Career Academies in Government, Law and Public Administration; and Hotel and Restaurant Management.
- Approved Design Documents for the Centennial Lane Elementary School addition.
- Approved the 2007-08 Board of Education meeting schedule.
- Approved amending the 2007-08 instructional calendar by moving the primary election day from March 4 to February 12 pending the Governor's signing of the related legislation.
- Approved year-end categorical budget transfer of funds for submission to the County Council.
- Approved Policy 1040, Safe School Environment, with amendments dealing with profanity and gang-related activity.
- Approved a motion to add profanity and gang-related activity to the Code of Conduct.
- Approved changes to Policy 2121 (8030) Graduation Requirements.
- Approved upcoming Board schedules.

Board Approves New Career Academies

Following a presentation by Coordinator of Career and Technology Education Rich Weisenhoff, the Board approved two new Career and Technology Academies for the 2007-08 school year. Hotel and Restaurant Management will be offered at the Applications and Research Lab. Government, Law and Public Administration will be offered locally at each high school, depending on sufficient enrollment. This academy is based on an approved Maryland State Department of Education career cluster pathway, but will not be a complete program option for graduation.

Revised Schedules Proposed for Burleigh Manor, Hollifield Station, and Phelps Luck

Director of Transportation David Drown reported on next year's proposed opening and closing times for schools. All high school schedules will remain on the same schedule as this year, opening at 7:25 a.m. and dismissing at 2:10 p.m.

Staff proposes to change the schedule of Burleigh Manor Middle School to five minutes later than this year, with an 8:00 a.m. opening and at 2:45 p.m. dismissal. Additionally, Hollifield Station Elementary School's schedule would be 35 minutes earlier than this year, with an 8:45 a.m. opening and a 3:15 p.m. dismissal. A ten-minute change is proposed for Phelps Luck Elementary that would have the school open at 8:55 a.m. and dismiss at 3:25 p.m. The recommended schedule for the new Veterans Elementary is 9:25 a.m. to 3:55 p.m.

Speakers Suggest Use of Technology Policy Falls Short

Five speakers testified at a public hearing on proposed revisions to Policy 1501, Acceptable Use of Computer Technology. All five speakers identified areas where they felt the policy needed more definition and more specificity. They also expressed concern that the policy does not appear to address system management at all levels, system controls, system security and disaster recovery plans. Speakers also noted that the Technology Advisory Committee was not consulted until after the policy was drafted.

Board members asked about the impact of delaying approval of the policy. Assistant Superintendent Bob Glascock stressed the importance of moving forward with approval of the policy, which is designed to support the Technology Plan. He acknowledged that no policy is perfect and that improvement will be ongoing. He indicated that some of the areas mentioned by speakers were deliberately left unaddressed at this time because no means for enforcement currently exist. He indicated changes and additions to the policy would be brought forward as necessary. The Board is scheduled to take action on the policy at the April 26 Board meeting.

Board Approves Safe School Policy

The Board approved changes to Policy 3445 (1040) Violence and School Safety (Safe School Environments). The new policy includes a definition of "bullying," consistent with the Safe School Reporting Act, replaces "assault" and "battery" with "physical attack" and "threat," and includes standards and expectations for employees and third parties. The Board added language related to the use of profanity and definitions and language related to gang activity. The Board also approved adding cyber-bullying and gang-related activity to the Code of Conduct.

Board Considers Assignment of Relocatable Classrooms

Manager of School Planning, Joel Gallihue, recommended the following changes in assignment of relocatable classrooms for the 2007-08 school year:

Add 2 – Centennial Lane Elementary School

Add 1 – Phelps Luck Elementary School

Add 3 – Reservoir High School

Add 1 – Hammond High School

Remove 2 – St. John's Lane Elementary School

Remove 1 – Ilchester Elementary School

Remove 4 – Howard High School

The School Planning staff will continue to review feedback from school administration and make a final recommendation to the Board on April 26, when the Board is expected to take action.

In Other Action...

The Chairman indicated that Mrs. Gordon was absent because she is attending the National School Boards Association Conference as a voting delegate.

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin shared details of his recent trip to the Republic of Korea. He also reported on the County Executive's funding of the school system's capital projects, the ratification of contracts for next year, and congratulated students who recently took top honors at the Baltimore Science Fair.

At Public Forum, Centennial Lane parent Lisa Regnante spoke in support of the proposed Centennial Lane Elementary School addition. Parent Sharon Nussbaum spoke to her concern that many colleges require SAT subject tests and that no one at the high schools suggests that students take these tests. Deputy Superintendent Sandra Erickson responded that the situation has been brought to our attention and it is being addressed. Finally, parent Linda Turner asked why certain children are allowed to go to special schools and others are not.

Accounting Officer Casey Burns presented staff responses to recommendations stemming from the Audit Report.

Roger Plunkett, Business, Community and Government Relations Officer, presented a report on the status of legislation introduced during the 2007 Maryland General Assembly.

At an appointment with the Board, Mary Jane Grauso, President of the PTA Council, spoke about Healthy Schools Day on April 30 and the status of the Backpack Committee work.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 26, 2007.