

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

January 24, 2008

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 24, 2008, at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Department of Education, located at 10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland. The following were present:

Frank J. Aquino, Chairman
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman
Lawrence H. Cohen
Sandra H. French
Patricia S. Gordon
Diane B. Mikulis
Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Andrew Gavelek, Student Member

Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent, Secretary/Treasurer
Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent
Patti Caplan, Director, Public Relations
Florence Jackson, Recording Secretary

Chairman Aquino called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m., and Ms. Althea Lyness, Hammond HS student, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Approval of Agenda

Action: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Special Presentation – Board Appreciation

Dr. Cousin thanked the Board for their commitment to students, staff, and the school system, and presented each member with a Certificate of Appreciation for their outstanding service to the community.

Approved-February 21, 2008

Howard County Council Member, Ms. Mary Kay Sigaty, presented a proclamation from the County Executive and County Council honoring the Howard County Board of Education. She added that the County Executive and County Council proclaim January 2008 as Board Appreciation Month in Howard County.

Board members expressed appreciation for the recognition and ceremony in their honor.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin thanked the CAC (Community Advisory Council) for a suggestion that resulted in forming a Facilities and School Planning Committee, which will be chaired by Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director, Facilities Planning and Management. The committee will include membership from the school system and the community and will review renovation standards and make recommendations regarding capital project priorities. Plans are to convene the committee by the first week in March.

Dr. Cousin congratulated the following employees:

1. Oakland Mills HS Principal Frank Eastham for receiving the 2008 Commission Award from the Martin Luther King, Jr., Howard County Holiday Commission.
2. Art Resource Teacher Linda Newton for her selection as the 2008 Maryland Art Educator Award from the National Art Education Association.
3. Joe Fischer, band director at River Hill HS, for being recognized by the national publication *School Band and Orchestra* in its 10th annual edition of "50 Directors Who Make A Difference."

Student Representative's Reports

Ms. Althea Lyness and Ms. Lauren Ory'Flowers, Hammond HS SGA (Student Government Association) students, reported on activities, events, and improvements that are taking place at their school. One major addition to Hammond HS this year is the Principal's Advisory Council. This council is made up of 50 students who periodically meet with the principal to offer feedback on policy and other changes instituted by the administration. School improvements have begun and will continue for the next few years.

Board Members' Report

Ms. Gordon reported that she would be presenting at the State Board of Education for the Commission on Universal Early Childhood Education.

Mr. Aquino recognized the following Public School Employees Child Development Program attendees: Ms. Barbara Lisle, Director; Ms. Fran Bealle, Assistant; Ms. Adrienne Williams-McKinley, Board Chair; Ms. Beth Lucas, Vice Chair; Ms. Kim Sampson, Past Chair; and Ms. Carol Durkee, Board Member.

Consent Agenda – General

Donations and Minutes of January 3, 2008 (Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2009 Operating Budget)

Action: Mrs. Giles moved approval of the General Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Donations – Approved by the Board.

Swansfield ES: Ted and Jennifer Mallo, in the amount of \$5,000, designated for the technology program, a computer and staff incentives.

Lime Kiln MS: Crews Control Corporation, in the amount of \$2,231, designated to expand options for programming in the Media Center.

ARL: Amanda and Dan Carpenter, a 1999 Volvo S-80 valued at \$5,000, designated for classroom instruction for the automotive students.

Atholton HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$1,750, designated for the purchase of uniforms for the cross country team.

Hammond HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$762, designated to assist with funding for the dance team's trip to Disney in February.

Long Reach HS: David L. Kelly, a Paul Reed Smith guitar valued at \$600, designated for student classroom use.

Marriotts Ridge: Mr. and Mrs. Tim Tress, a conference table, file cabinets, office chairs, an executive desk and dry erase board.

Monaghan's Pub, in the amount of \$565, designated to supplement the cost of the girls' soccer banquet.

Boosters, in the amount of \$1,290, designated for the purchase of four table tennis tables.

Reservoir HS: The Outer Office, Inc., in the amount of \$1,200, designated to support the drama club's production of "The Little Shop of Horrors."

Dart Group II Foundation, Inc., in the amount of \$1,000, designated for the ALS program.

River Hill HS: Eva Anderson, in the amount of \$2,500, designated for the Caitlin Dunbar Memorial Fund scholarship.

Minutes of January 3, 2008 (Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2009 Operating Budget – Approved by the Board.

Consent Agenda – Restricted*

Bids and Contracts and Approval of Lease - Employees Child Development Center.

Mrs. French asked that the Approval of Lease - Employees Child Development Center be pulled for discussion.

Action: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the Restricted Consent Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Dr. Siddiqui and approved by the members of the Board (7/0*).

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

<u>Exhibit</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
P-1	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION	
	Trans-White	\$ 54,963.00
	Dents Bus Service	57,213.00
	ABC Transportation	60,750.00
	Amoss Bus Service	61,220.00

	Woodlawn Motor Coach, Inc.	68,724.00
	Doreste's Bus Service, LLC	90,864.00
	JC Bus Co.	121,770.00
	K.A.M. Enterprises, Inc.	154,665.00
	Tip Top Transportation	160,560.00
	Bowens' Bus Service, Inc.	<u>260,018.70</u>
	TOTAL	\$1,090,747.70
P-2	CLARKSVILLE MS KITCHEN RENOVATION	
	Ashland Equipment, Inc.	\$297,191.00
P-3	SUP. PHYSICAL, OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES	
	Sunbelt Staffing	\$46,500.00

Approval of Lease – Employees Child Development Center

Mr. Roger Plunkett, Business, Community, and Government Relations Officer, clarified the question Mrs. French asked regarding the status of availability of space for children on the waiting list for the program. He said the waiting list consists of about a dozen children, but with 30 to 33 children leaving the program next year, there should be enough space to accommodate children on the waiting list.

Ms. Lisle, Program Director, thanked Dr. Cousin, the Board, Mr. Plunkett, Ms. Bealle, and Ms. Sampson for their hard work for the betterment of all children and for their continued support of the child development program.

Action: Mrs. French moved approval of the Public School Employees Child Development Program Center Lease. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0*).

Bridge to Excellence – High School Staffing

Presenter: Mrs. Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent, School Administration.

Mrs. Wise reported that the current high school staffing ratio of 1:23:5 provides insufficient staff to address interventions needed for students to pass the high school assessments and to keep classes at 34 students or less. The proposed procedure eliminates the need for principals to request intervention staffing and additional staff to keep classes at 34 students or below. Staffed with the current ratio, all high school principals must request additional staff to meet the needs of

their students and schools. The proposed ratio is responsive to school needs and reflects the practice of teachers teaching five of the seven classes in a student schedule.

Mrs. Wise recommended that staff implement the proposed high school staffing ratio in school year 2008-2009. Over time, staff will recommend the reduction of class sizes at the high school level as budgets permit.

Discussion:

Ms. Gordon asked about the principals' reactions regarding the new high school schedule. Mr. Michaels, Secondary Director for School Administration, acknowledged the principals in attendance, who indicated their approval of the schedule.

Mrs. French asked how the cap of 34 students per class would affect a class that has a higher number of students who want to attend. Mr. Michaels explained that this dilemma is currently an issue and is dealt with on a student-by-student basis. Depending on the course, students may have identified alternative selections, it may be possible to balance other class sizes and combine classes to create an opening, or it may ultimately lead to a request for additional staffing.

Mr. David Bruzga, Secondary Director for School Administration, added that the flexibility of pool positions in the budget can be used to assist schools with making the decision of splitting classes or adding an additional section. Consideration of the subject matter and level of class is used to determine the outcome.

Mrs. Erickson noted that this is a first step in trying to get high school class sizes under control. The more staff that can be put into the high schools, the quicker the cap can be reduced. Eight positions will be added in school year 2008-2009, and more positions will be requested in future years.

Mrs. French stated that the eight additional positions for next school year will satisfy demands from state and federal levels.

Mrs. Mikulis pointed out that the number of students per teacher is not increasing. The numbers are being calculated in a way that reflects reality, which will make it easier to lower the ratio.

Dr. Cousin said that when the school system changed from a six-period day to a seven-period day, no adjustment was made to staffing. He added that the ultimate goal is to reduce class size at the high school level, which takes money and time to accomplish.

Mr. Gavelek added that, as a student, he is delighted to see the staffing ratio coming down.

Dr. Siddiqui asked how this would help principals overall. Mr. Michaels explained the lengthy process used by principals and schedulers to come up with class configurations that reflect the needs of students. He added that due to the amount of time the entire process takes, receiving what is needed up front would be a tremendous workload advantage.

Dr. Addie Kaufman, Principal of Reservoir HS, and Mr. Sterlind Burke, Principal of Hammond HS, both spoke in support of the reduction in class size and the simplified, straightforward process that will result.

Bridge to Excellence – High School Interventions

Presenters: Dr. Clarissa Evans, Executive Director Secondary Curricular Programs; Ms. Patricia Daley, Coordinator of Special Education; Ms. Zeleana Morris, Coordinator, Secondary Language Arts; Ms. Terri Lienhard, Special Education Teacher, Wilde Lake HS; Ms. Marty Brennan, English Teacher, Wilde Lake HS; Mr. John Quinn, Coordinator, Secondary Science; Ms. Kate Castellucci, Biology Teacher, Howard HS; Dr. Mark Stout, Coordinator, Secondary Social Studies; Mr. Paul Lemle, Social Studies Teacher, Wilde Lake HS; Mr. Scott Ruehl, Coordinator, Secondary Mathematics; Ms. Lynette Moore, Mathematics Instructional Support Teacher, Reservoir HS; Dr. Addie Kaufman, Principal, Reservoir HS.

In addition to other graduation requirements, the state of Maryland is requiring all students in the graduating Class of 2009 to pass four high school assessments. HCPSS has a number of structures in place to help all students meet this new graduation requirement. The state is currently developing regulations that will provide local school systems with another tool to help students meet the assessment component of the graduation requirement, namely, *The Bridge Plan for Academic Validation*. *The Bridge Plan* provides an alternative way for students to demonstrate mastery of the objectives assessed on the high school assessments.

Future direction includes:

- Continuing to monitor changes at the state level and make necessary changes in HCPSS policies and procedures.
- Continuing to work with all stakeholders to provide the needed range of interventions and supports for high school students.
- Continuing to monitor closely the status of the Classes of 2009 and beyond on required state assessments.

The goal is for all students to pass the appropriate courses and to pass the HSAs the first time they are taken. However, some students need extra assistance to pass the courses and exams. Providing intervention services is the major vehicle to assist students who require additional instruction and support.

The school system offers before-course and during-course interventions to support students as they work to pass the course and pass the end-of-course state assessment. For many years, HCPSS has offered summer school courses to students who fail required courses. Over the past two years, the school system has offered mastery courses for students who pass the course and fail the associated HSA. Staff members from Howard, Reservoir, and Wilde Lake high schools shared information about interventions that have been successful at their schools.

Discussion:

In reference to *The Bridge Plan*, Mrs. Mikulis asked how many students in a graduating class might actually be eligible for this alternative option. Dr. Evans stated that including all 12 high schools, 100 students would be a rough estimate. Mrs. Mikulis also asked how HCPSS will be handling the needs of project monitor staff. Dr. Evans stated that a meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2008, where high school principals will meet with representatives from MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) to get an understanding of the requirements for project monitors. Dr. Evans indicated her feeling that classroom teachers will be assigned as monitors for students, which would be part of the intervention staffing already available to the high schools.

Mrs. Giles asked how project modules will impact a student that has to pass the courses by the end of school year 2008-2009. Dr. Evans explained that HCPSS has volunteered to help the state with the development of project modules, and three of the four offices have

already been contacted for assistance. By assisting the state in the development of project modules, HCPSS will have an understanding of what the modules will look like and what will be required of the students and teachers.

Ms. Gordon asked for clarification on the size of an assignment if a student fails an exam. Dr. Evans explained that the number of project modules that a student will have to complete depends on the score of the failed exam: the lower the score, the more project modules required for completion of a given exam. She added that staff is working very hard to help students, parents, and the community understand that completing the modules is not an easy way to meet the requirement. Failing an exam could mean almost a year of extra work for a student, which would consist of putting together a portfolio, and once reviewed, could be judged as less than acceptable. Dr. Evans added that if a student has met all other graduation requirements except for the HSA requirement and their Bridge Plan was not considered acceptable, the student would have to go back and continue testing or redo the Bridge Plan until they either pass the exam or the Bridge Plan is accepted.

Dr. Siddiqui asked how the particular content area that a student has failed is being identified. Dr. Evans said that local assessments from the previous year are used to diagnose specific areas of need.

Mr. Gavelek asked what would happen to a senior who is scheduled to graduate in a few months but is told that their module was judged unacceptable. In response to Mr. Gavelek's concerns, Dr. Evans stated that Bridge classes will begin in the fall semester, and one of the first goals will be to have as many students as possible complete their Bridge Plan modules by January. The second semester would be available if needed to refine and rework projects. Staff will be looking at submission dates in order to get reworked projects in early in the second semester to afford the student another opportunity for improvement if needed. The state is also offering testing in April for seniors only. Dr. Evans agreed with Mr. Gavelek's concern about students getting too close to graduation without any additional opportunity to pass the HSA.

Mrs. French asked if the state is providing additional funding to pay teachers to be project monitors. Dr. Evans stated that no additional funds will come from the state. Mrs. French asked how the additional work being placed on teachers will affect school staffing ratios. Mrs. Erickson said that more staffing is needed in the high schools. Once

the ratios are down as low as possible, this will give the school-based principal the opportunity to manipulate staffing to meet the needs of students. Mrs. Erickson pointed out that HCPSS does not currently have a 100-percent graduation rate, even without the HSA requirements.

Mrs. French pointed out that under the Bridge Plan there is a detailed appeal process that a student can go through if their project is not accepted. She asked if a student is offered an appeal process for any other type of testing or project they are required to do. Mrs. Erickson stated that she did not know of any appeal process offered to students, and that Mr. Blom, General Counsel, once indicated that students cannot appeal grades.

Mr. Aquino commented on concerns about the Bridge Plan including the need for more staff. Dr. Evans added that the goal is for very few students to need to access the Bridge Plan.

Mrs. Gordon asked how many students have failed multiple exams. Dr. Evans said she would request this information from the assessment office and get back to the Board. Mr. Glascock added that according to the state, the success rate on the retakes for Howard County is the highest in the state, which is a good indication that the interventions are working for students. Mrs. Erickson added that every student who wants to take advantage of what teachers are offering will have the opportunity to pass the exams.

Mrs. French asked if adding rigor to the middle school level has been considered. Mrs. Erickson stated that a lot of rigor has been added to the middle school curriculum over the years. She added that HCPSS has a broad curriculum that is offered to students, and curriculum will not be narrowed to raise the grades for this requirement. Dr. Evans noted that Ms. Zeleana Morris looked at the English curriculum and the requirements needed for the HSA to ensure that the prerequisites are in place throughout the program.

Legislative Report – 2008 General Assembly

Presenter: Mr. Roger Plunkett, Business, Community and Government Relations.

Mr. Plunkett presented the Legislative Platform statement for the 2008 Legislative Session of the Maryland General Assembly. The Board will use this platform to advocate for state budget and

legislative issues that are significant to public education in Howard County. Advocacy on state budget and legislative issues can be increased through the development, adoption, and dissemination of position statements to the General Assembly during the legislative session. The perspective in the Legislative Platform reflects this focus and is intended to assist elected representatives during the 2008 Maryland General Assembly. Positions that are unique to Howard County include information about BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) and high school assessments.

Discussion:

Board members made the following suggestions regarding the 2008 Legislative Platform statement:

- Add the word "public" in front of "charter schools" for the heading on page 2.
- Move the third bullet, which appears on page 3 under opposition, to the first bullet position, due to the strength of the statement.
- Change the wording of "opposition of private schools" to "non-public schools."
- List "Local School Board Authority" (page 8) as the first page of the statement.
- List "Funding Adequate Public School Education" (page 9) as the second page of the statement.

Mr. Plunkett said he will include a cover sheet and a table of contents with the statement, and the full statement will be placed on the school system's website.

Mr. Aquino expressed concern about in-school suspensions. He stated that he is not against in-school suspensions in certain situations, but the flexibility to arrive at the best decision should be the decision of the school system. Mr. Plunkett agreed and added that a code of conduct was developed by HCPSS educators and would be adhered to. Mrs. Giles and Mrs. French suggested the following additional changes: take out the word "certain" before offenses, and add either "state specified offenses" or "legislatively specified offenses".

Mr. Cohen asked if there have been any changes in maintaining the Maintenance of Effort. Mr. Plunkett said that some legislators would like to make a change, bills are still being introduced, and there are still budget discussions taking place.

Mr. Cohen asked about the status of retirement and pension being switched to the county. Mr. Plunkett said advocacy is needed to prevent the switch.

Action: Mr. Gavelek moved approval to adopt the 2008 Legislative Platform for the General Assembly as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Giles and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Proposed 2008-2009 Instructional Calendar

Presenter: Mrs. Patti Caplan, Director of Public Relations.

Mrs. Caplan presented the proposed revised 2008-2009 Instructional Calendar. Revisions to the calendar include:

- Wednesday, August 20, 2008, Professional Day.
- Monday, December 22, 2008, and Tuesday, December 23, 2008, will be included in winter break.
- Tuesday, June 16, 2008, will be the scheduled last day for students (if no inclement weather days are needed).

The proposed schedule calls for staff to return on August 18, 2008, with students returning on August 25. Winter break extends from December 22 through January 4. Spring break is scheduled for April 6 through April 13, 2009.

Discussion:

Mr. Aquino clarified that the first week of school for students will be a full week.

Mr. Gavalek clarified that the words "High School Exams" will be printed on the calendar in January 2009 on the days that exams are to take place.

Mrs. French expressed concern about the two extra days that will be added to winter break. Mrs. Caplan stated that when the calendar is being put together, the committee is trying to provide for instructional continuity, the best possible conditions for instruction, and to have full weeks of instruction as often as possible.

Mr. Aquino stated that by adding two extra days to winter break, then the quidproquo would be to lose two days over the spring break. Although he felt it was too late to look at this change for the 2008-2009 calendar, he expressed concern about how late in June school will be open. Mrs. Caplan said that a few years ago a study regarding shortening spring break was done at the request of the Board. The results were about a 50/50 split – for or against shortening spring break. Her opinion is that it should be looked at from an instructional perspective.

Mr. Cohen indicated that he was not concerned about school ending in mid to late June due to snow days but felt that other options, including the shortening of spring break, should be looked at in the future. Mrs. Caplan pointed out that there are several considerations involved in how late in June school is open, including managing a full summer school program, as well as the time needed to complete school construction projects over the summer break.

Ms. Gordon stated that no matter what time the school year is scheduled to end, the situation inside the building with the children gets more relaxed toward the end of the school year. Students tend to lose interest before the last day of school.

Mrs. Giles pointed out that the decision to add two additional winter break days does not have to do with winter travel but with instructional continuity. She also shared the concerns of other Board members about the time off for spring break needing to be more flexible.

Mrs. Mikulis requested feedback from teachers to the Board regarding the April 23, 2009, Professional Work Day, since the calendar is being structured around the "Take Your Child to Work Day." She added that depending on feedback, the Board could look at other alternatives. Mr. Glascock said he would include questions on the teacher feedback sheet and asked the Board to let him know of any specific questions they would like to suggest.

Mrs. Mikulis asked for a wording clarification on the June calendar regarding the last student day and inclement weather days.

Dr. Siddiqui suggested that some sort of publication be developed regarding the professional development day in April coinciding with the "Take Your Child to Work Day." Mrs. Caplan noted that an article on this issue appeared in the Sun paper.

Dr. Siddiqui pointed out that important dates are listed in the calendar at the top of each month.

Mrs. Giles noted that the calendar includes the required 180 school days. Mrs. Caplan added that it also accommodates the 192 teacher contracted days.

Mrs. French asked if the accommodation of both Passover and Easter is how the spring break week is scheduled. Mrs. Caplan said that depending on when Easter falls can make a difference as to whether spring break falls before or after Easter. She added that MSA testing is a factor as well.

Mr. Gavelek commented that he felt that spring break should remain a full week and not be shortened. He said he believes the teachers appreciate the break as much as the students.

Action: Dr. Siddiqui moved approval of the Proposed 2008-2009 Instructional Calendar as revised. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gavelek and approved by the members of the Board (7/1), with Mrs. French voting no.

Mrs. French explained that she did not agree with the two additional days off for winter break, and she did not agree with the professional development day coinciding with "Take Your Child to Work Day" on a Thursday and students having to return to school on the following Friday.

Scheduling

The Board scheduled upcoming meetings and events.

Appointment – Community Advisory Council (CAC) Monthly Report

Presenter: Mr. Chris Wertman, Chairman of the Community Advisory Council (CAC).

Mr. Wertman thanked the Board members for their dedication and support for all children in HCPSS. He presented recommendations regarding the budget as follows:

- The time between public presentation of the budget and the public hearing be extended to at least six weeks.
- The budget be developed and provided in a format that allows for easier perusing and analysis of the budget from a variety of perspectives, not just the state-mandated format.
- Time limits for public hearing be adjusted for identified groups, allowing for broader communities of interest that they represent.

Mr. Wertman strongly urged the Board and the Superintendent to give serious consideration for a senior position of Chief Technology Officer with the HCPSS.

Adjournment

Action: Mrs. Giles moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Information Item

Fundraising/Donation Annual Report

*Under Section 3-701 of the Education Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*, the Student Member may not vote on these matters. Passage of a motion by the Board on these matters requires the affirmative vote of four (4) Board members.