

A Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, January 24, 2008

Action Items

- Approved the general consent agenda donations and the minutes of regular board meetings.
- Approved the restricted consent agenda including bids and contracts, the lease for the Employee Child Development Center, and the minutes of closed board meetings.
- Approved a Legislative Platform for the 2008 session of the Maryland General Assembly.
- Approved the instructional calendar for the 2008-2009 school year.

New high school staffing formula proposed

Assistant Superintendent Linda Wise presented a proposal to increase the high school staffing ratio from 1:23.5 to 27.5:1.4, which is a truer measure of current class sizes and is the first step in lowering class sizes in high schools. The proposed procedure eliminates the need for principals to request intervention staffing and additional staff to keep classes at 34 or below. Staff will implement the proposed high school staffing ratio in SY 08-09. Over time, staff will recommend the reduction of class sizes at the high school level as budgets permit.

Interventions support student success on High School Assessments

Clarissa B. Evans, Executive Director Secondary Curricular Programs, introduced a Bridge to Excellence Report on structures the school system has in place to help all students meet the new graduation requirement associated with the High School Assessments. The goal is for all students to pass the appropriate courses and to pass the HSAs the first time they take them. 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 HSA associated with the course. Staff members from Howard, Reservoir and Wilde Lake high schools shared information about interventions that have been successful at their schools.

Board adds days to winter break for 2008-2009 school year

In approving the 2008-2009 school calendar, the Board extended winter break by two days by adding December 22 and 23 to the scheduled days off. The Board also moved the first Professional Development Day from the Friday before Labor Day to Wednesday, August 20. The approved schedule calls for staff to return on August 18 and students on August 25. Winter break extends from December 22 through January 4. Spring break is scheduled for April 6 through April 13. The last student day will be June 16.

In Other Action

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In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin announced that he is forming a Facilities and School Planning Committee, which will be chaired by Ken Roey. The committee will have 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:

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

Prior to the meeting, staff honored the members of the Board of Education in recognition of National Board of Education Month.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 7, 2008.