

## **A Summary of the Board of Education Meeting Thursday, March 27, 2008**

### **Action Items**

- Approved a proclamation designating April as School Library Media Month in the HCPSS.
- Approved a consent agenda including donations, minutes of regular Board meetings, and the Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust.
- Approved a restricted consent agenda consisting of bids and contracts.
- Approved Board positions on education-related legislation under consideration by the 2008 Maryland General Assembly.
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- Approved the 2008-2009 schedule of Board of Education meetings.
- Approved the Board's tentative quarterly agenda for April-June 2008.
- Moved the approval of the FY09 Operating and Capital Budgets and the regular Board meeting from Thursday, May 22 to Tuesday, May 27, 2008.

### **Baseline data show strong performance on science field test**

Executive Director Terry Alban reported on the county's performance on the 2007 field test of the Science Maryland School Assessment. In Grade 5, 78 percent of students scored at proficient or advanced. A total of 82.8 percent of students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade scored at proficient or advanced. Six elementary schools and six middle schools had over 90 percent of their students score at proficient or advanced.

### **Bridge to Excellence report focuses on Hispanic, African American student achievement**

Students are more successful when schools and families work together to identify structures and approaches that meet the needs of the students and families in a given community. That is the mission of the HCPSS Department of Student, Family and Community Services, according to the department's director Diane Martin.

In a Bridge to Excellence report to the Board, Martin supplied data on the achievement of African American and Hispanic students over the past four years on state tests and presented information on the programs and services currently in place to support the academic achievement of students in these two student groups. The Black Student Achievement Program (BSAP) was first implemented in HCPSS during the 1986-1987 school year. HCPSS added a Hispanic Achievement Program to the Department of Student, Family, and Community Services during the 2006-2007 school year.

The system is focusing comprehensively on the achievement of all student groups, including African American and Hispanic students, through its Bridge to Excellence Master Plan. The HCPSS now offers more research-based

interventions during the school day and has increased the number of students participating in extended day interventions. Academic Intervention summer school has expanded to include more schools and the instructional program has been refined to focus more intensely on areas of need revealed on the local assessments. Therefore, the work being done by BSAP and the Hispanic Achievement Program is but one component of the system's comprehensive approach to accelerating student achievement. These two programs focus on supporting students and their families.

Maryland School Assessment data at the system level show that African American and Hispanic elementary students have achieved the system target in reading each year from 2004 to 2007. For the last two years (2006 and 2007), African American and Hispanic elementary students also achieved the system target in mathematics. Of the five ethnic/racial groups, African American and Hispanic elementary students consistently have the lowest performance in both reading and mathematics; however, it is important to note that African American student performance has improved each year and the improvement from 2004 to 2007 exceeds the improvement of elementary students overall. Hispanic student performance has gone up and down over the four years and the 2007 performance in mathematics is actually slightly lower than it was in 2004.

African American and Hispanic middle school students have been less successful in achieving system targets. The performance of both groups on the reading assessment has gone up and down over the four years and the 2007 performance on the reading assessment is slightly lower than it was in 2004. Both groups have made significant gains in mathematics since 2004, and both African American and Hispanic students are improving in mathematics at a faster rate than middle school students overall.

In general, African American and Hispanic students are improving their performance on all four High School Assessments, and in many cases these groups are improving at a faster rate than students overall. Especially noteworthy is the improvement of African American and Hispanic students on the Algebra HSA.

The school system's ultimate goal is to eliminate the achievement gaps and have all students meeting or exceeding local and state performance standards. The BSAP and the Hispanic Achievement Program are important components of the Master Plan's focus on accelerating the achievement of African American and Hispanic students.

#### **In other action...**

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin noted that 2008 graduation dates and times have been released. As a result of the times, six high school schedules will be adjusted to allow staff and siblings to attend ceremonies. Several graduation dates are earlier than in previous years;

therefore, the last day for seniors at Centennial, Atholton, and Marriotts Ridge high schools will be May 22. The last day at all other high schools will remain May 23.

Dr. Cousin also congratulated:

- Kelly Horan of Reservoir High for her selection as Howard County's 2008 Washington Post Agnes Meyer Teacher of the Year.
- Guidance Counselors Susan Castelbaum of Hollifield Station Elementary School, Tina Flynn of Elkridge Landing Middle School, and Donna Ueckerman of Oakland Mills High School who were selected as Guidance Counselors of the Year; and Debbie Goins, Guidance Secretary at Hammond Middle School, who was named Advocate of the Year by the Howard County Association of Counseling and Development.

He also introduced Mt. Hebron High Principal Dave Brown who reported on the recognition received by the Mt. Hebron Band and band member Traci Ervin, who was the two millionth Disney Magic Music Days Performer at Disney World.

Chris Wertman, Chairman of the Community Advisory Council, updated the Board on recent activities of the council.

**The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 10, 2008.**