

A Summary of the Board of Education Meeting Thursday, May 8, 2008

ACTION ITEMS

- Approved a restricted consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, the appointment of the Local Representative PL81-874, an easement on the Clemens Crossing Elementary School property and minutes of the Board's closed meetings.
- Approved a consent agenda including donations, with the exclusion of the Mt. Hebron High scoreboard, and minutes of regular board meetings; received status reports on the operating budget and the school construction fund.
- Approved the 2008 Adequate Public Facilities Chart.
- Approved the nomination of Ellen Flynn Giles for the Board of Directors of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education.
- Confirmed the election of Jire Bedomosi from Marriotts Ridge High School as the 2008 Student Member to the Board of Education.
- Approved a charter for establishment of a committee to review and revise Policy 6030, Procurement of Architectural and Engineering Services, and Policy 6040, Procurement of Construction Management Services.

Review finds noncompliance with procurement policies

Superintendent Sydney Cousin reported on the findings of a review of construction management and architectural/engineering services for capital projects and presented recommendations to ensure future compliance with policies governing the selection process. The school system's process for the selection of construction managers, architects, and engineers for school construction projects is set forth in Board policies 6030, Procurement of Architects/Engineers, and 6040, Procurement of Construction Managers. These policies were enacted in 1990, with the following stated goals:

- To obtain a consistently high level of professional expertise in our construction projects;
- To administer a selection process which is open to competent and experienced firms in the region;
- To obtain services at a cost reflective of the size of the project and comparable projects in the region.

The regulations and implementation procedures associated with the policy set forth an annual selection process. From 1990 through 1999, the selection process as specified in these policies was strictly adhered to by staff. Beginning in 1999, staff began using an alternative selection process for some projects, which involved administering the notice and screening/selection procedure on a multi-year basis by creating a short list of acceptable firms. Firms were then selected for each project off of the short list and recommended for appointment.

According to Dr. Cousin, this process was consistent with the expressed policy

objectives, however, it did not strictly comply with the regulations and implementation procedures. Because of this deviation, he initiated an investigation of the scope of the issue and whether there were any financial ramifications.

A review by independent auditor Clifton Gunderson, LLP, verified that the alternative process did not result in an increase in costs; in fact, studies indicate that the HCPSS has the lowest construction costs in the region. To improve efficiency and accountability, Dr. Cousin recommended expanding the role of the school system's purchasing officer in contracting for school construction services. He also proposed revising Board policy to incorporate the practice of pre-qualifying a short list of approved firms. Work will begin immediately on policy revisions.

Opening and closing times change for four schools

In order to maintain or improve the efficiency of school bus service, opening and closing times for four schools will be adjusted for the 2008-2009 school year. The following schools will have a time change:

Public Schools	Current Times	Recommended Times
Murray Hill MS	8:40-3:25	8:30-3:15
Patuxent Valley MS	7:30-2:15	7:40-2:25
Parochial Schools		
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	8:40-3:10	9:15-3:45
St. Louis	8:30-3:00	9:15-3:45

Board receives comments on policy revisions

Steven Estomin, representing the Community Advisory Council (CAC), testified in support of the revisions to Policy 9280, Students Charged with Community or Reportable Offenses. Chairman of CAC Chris Wertman indicated that he would supply written testimony via email regarding Policy 8020, Grading and Reporting: High School.

In other action...

In his report to the Board, the Superintendent remarked on the Homewood Center Career Day and the Cedar Lane Challenge Day, which he attended. He also congratulated Wilde Lake High School student Phillip Sandborn, who for the second consecutive year, won first place in the Engineering Division at the National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium Competition. In addition, Phillip has just been named the Northrop Grumman Engineering Scholar for Howard County.

At Public Forum, Hammond Middle School student Matthew Acquard petitioned the Board to place defibrillators in all schools. Student Alexandra Wolff spoke to the Board about her campaign to stop bullying. Allen Hardester addressed the Board on health insurance and asked the school system to reexamine its position

given the impact of new Maryland legislation. Carl Bess addressed the Board on the importance of community involvement in education.

During an appointment with the Board, Chairman of the Community Advisory Council Chris Wertman reported on recent activities of the Council and read the ceremony used by the military to remember those who are prisoners of war or missing in action.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 pm on Tuesday, May 27, 2008.