

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

July 12, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, July 12, 2007, 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:

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

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:04 p.m.

Mrs. Mikulis welcomed 24 students and 4 teachers from the Iksan school district in Korea who are here as part of a Summer Cultural Exchange program. Mrs. Min Kim, Equity Assurance Coordinator, introduced Yuna Chae, who spoke about the experiences provided by the program and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend.

Nyala West, fourth-grade student at Bryant Woods ES, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Public Forum**

Ms. Linda Turner, parent, remarked on the need to conduct testing and provide early remediation for children with dyslexia.

Ms. Jen Harwood, Instructional Team Leader, complimented the Professional Development design team for the countywide IEP (Individual Education Plan) training.

Ms. Gail Calhoun expressed concern with the condition of property owned by the Ashwell Bus Company and suggested that the property owners are in violation of zoning regulations by using the property as a bus parking and maintenance facility.

Mrs. Mikulis recognized Boy Scouts from Troop 793, attending the meeting as part of their Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge requirement, and Boy Scouts from Troop 555, who are working on their Communications Badge.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Aquino explained that some changes in the agenda are necessary as a result of the Student Member being granted partial voting rights. The Consent Agenda will now be split into two parts: General (for items the Student Member may vote on) and Restricted (for items that the Student Member may not vote on). He also explained that the General Consent Agenda would require affirmative votes from five members to pass, and the Restricted Consent Agenda would require four affirmative votes for approval.

The following changes were made to the agenda:

- Include Student Member's Report as part of Board Members' Reports.
- Divide Consent Agenda into two parts: General (Student Member votes) and Restricted (Student Member does not vote).
- Delete: Appointment – PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC).

*Action:* Mr. Aquino moved approval of the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Giles and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Cousin provided a progress report on the construction of the Bushy Park ES replacement school and Veterans ES, along with other summer construction projects. He asked Mr. Ray Brown, Chief Operating Officer, to report on the status of maintenance items identified through the PTA Council's School Health Day survey. Mrs. French commented on the responsiveness of HCPSS staff regarding this issue.

### **Student Representatives' Reports**

Mrs. Mikulis introduced Nyaia West, fourth-grade student at Bryant Woods ES, and Jair Roberson, fifth-grade student at Phelps Luck ES, who presented information on their positive experiences with the BSAP (Black Student Achievement Program) Summer Program.

Dr. Cousin recognized representatives of the program in attendance, including parents, students, and staff.

### **Board Members' Reports**

Mrs. Mikulis noted that the Board's Student Member was absent due to his participation in a special program at the Naval Academy. He will attend his first official Board meeting on August 16, 2007.

Mr. Aquino provided a brief summary on the limitations of the Student Member's voting rights. The Student Member can now vote on all issues except those that fall into the categories of legally confidential, Attendance Area Adjustments (AAA), budget issues, and consolidation of schools. In addition, there will be limitations on the Student Member's ability to attend Closed Meetings of the Board. Mr. Aquino also explained that because the Board is now comprised of eight voting members, affirmative votes from five members will be needed in order to pass any motion on which the Student Member is voting.

Dr. Siddiqui reported on her attendance at a picnic for the Relatives as Parents Program, sponsored by the Howard County Office of Children's Services. She noted that the program is a great resource for any relative who is acting as a parent in the caretaking of a child. The group meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Florence Bain Center in Columbia, Maryland. Speakers talk about various topics, including resources available in the county to help get services, as well as school system issues that arise.

Ms. Gordon stated that the Board of Education will have a booth at the Howard County Fair for the first time this year. She extended an invitation to the public to visit the booth to personally meet Board Members and staff and learn more about the Board and HCPSS.

Mrs. Mikulis noted that the Board agenda items are posted on BoardDocs, which can be accessed online at [www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org). Click on Board of Education, then the BoardDocs tree icon.

### **Consent Agenda – General**

Financial Reports/School Construction Reports; and Minutes of May 24 (Budget Approval), June 6 (BOE/CC), and June 14, 2007 (Regular Meeting).

*Action:* Dr. Siddiqui moved approval of the General Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Financial Reports/School Construction Reports – Accepted by the Board.

Minutes of May 24 (Budget Approval), June 6 (BOE/CC), and June 14, 2007 (Regular Meeting) – Approved by the Board.

### **Consent Agenda - Restricted**

Bids and Contracts, Staff Personnel, Harriet Tubman Building/Atholton HS Deed of Easement, Sales Contract Addendum for Land Transfer – St. John's Baptist Church, and Donations.

*Action:* Mr. Cohen moved approval of the Restricted Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Staff Personnel – Approved by the Board.*Resignations:*

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Reason	Years in Howard County	Effective Date
Aqueveque, Brooke	LRHS	Forg. Lang.	Relocation	12.0	06/14/07
Baker, Bridget	MRHS	Spec. Ed.	Relocation	7.0	06/14/07
Barnes, Amy	BPES	Elem. Ed.	Relocation	3.0	06/14/07
Berry, Joseph	MHHS	Counselor	Other Employment	7.0	06/30/07
Brown, Laura	WOES	Elem. Ed.	Personal	14.0	06/14/07
Crowley-Johnson, Jennifer	LWES	Music	Relocation	2.0	06/14/07
Dinicola, Rebecca	RHHS	Soc. Studies	Relocation	4.0	06/14/07
DiPierro, Marci	FRES	Spec. Ed	Relocation	3.0	06/14/07
Dutton, Wendy	GCES	Elem. Ed.	Relocation	2.0	06/14/07
Fruman, Rebecca	EES	G.T. Resource	Family Obligations	5.0	06/14/07
Healey, Brian	MHMS	Soc. Studies	Relocation	2.0	06/14/07
Jenkins, Robert	HAHS	Soc. Studies	Pursue Other Career	10.0	06/14/07
Katz, Ayala	TRES	Spec. Ed.	Personal	1.0	06/14/07
Katz, Lisa	Fr. Leave	Soc. Studies	Other Employment	10.0	06/14/07
Kew, Claire	EMMS	Forg. Lang.	Relocation	1.0	06/14/07
Killian, Sarah	HCMS	Spec. Ed.	Relocation	1.0	06/14/07
Kingan, Gretchen	WVES	Spec. Ed.	Family Obligations	1.0	06/14/07
Krystofiak, Heather	BBMS	SMHT	Other Employment	6.0	06/14/07
Leidy, Justin	MHMS	English	Relocation	6.0	06/14/07
Linden, Patricia	STD SVC	SMHT	Relocation	6.0	06/14/07
Marks, Karen	LWES	Media	Other Employment	5.0	06/14/07
Mongano, Amy	WLHS	Science	Personal	7.0	06/14/07
Norton, Patricia	HAMS	Spec. Ed.	Relocation	2.0	06/14/07
Poll, Stephanie	ARL	Science	Relocation	3.0	06/14/07
Reeves, Janice	GCES	Elem. Ed.	Other Employment	7.0	06/14/07
Riley-Newell, Elizabeth	MHMS	English	Relocation	2.0	06/14/07
Santoro, Regina	C.O	Psychologist	Other Employment	4.0	06/30/07
Snyder, Beth	RES	Elem. Ed.	Other Employment	1.0	06/14/07
St. Peter, Mindi	ELMS	English	Relocation	1.0	06/14/07
Sutsko, Kathryn	FES	Spec. Ed.	Relocation	3.5	06/14/07
Suzuki, Naomi	THES	Elem. Ed.	Relocation	4.0	06/14/07
Taylor, Kathryn	ELMS	Forg. Lang.	Return to School	4.0	06/14/07
Traber, Meredith	CMS	Reading	Relocation	1.0	06/14/07
Williams, Melissa	BMMS	Soc. Studies	Relocation	8.0	06/14/07
Welsh, Stacey	FES	Spec. Ed.	Pursue Other Career	6.0	06/14/07
Wist, Allison	HSES	Elem. Ed.	Family Obligations	10.0	06/14/07
Zahra, Julia	BPES	Elem. Ed.	Relocation	1.0	06/14/07

*Contracts:*

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Place of Teaching Assignment	Step	Effective Date
Bell, Lissa	SES	ELE	--	D-01	8/21/07
Berngantt, Alena	Unassign.	OT	Sheppard Pratt	C-04	8/21/07
Bortz, Julie	GHS/MHHS	SCI	Private Industry	D-03	8/21/07
Breton, Mary	MRHS	SPE	New Jersey	C-15	8/21/07
Brooks, Octavia	Unassign.	MAT	--	A-01	8/21/07
Butler, Adrienne	PLES	SPE (K-8)	--	A-01	8/21/07
Byrnes, Courtney	AES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Castillo, Michelle	BBMS	SPE (K-12)	--	A-01	8/21/07
Chapman, Dion	RHS	SPE (6-Adult)	Private School	B-15	8/21/07
Chang, Joshua	GCES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Cirucci, Christina	EES	ELE	Pennsylvania	C-04	8/21/07
Clark, Laura	CES	ELE	Anne Arundel Co.	C-14	8/21/07
Coburn, Meaghan	AES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Connonr, Carolyn	GHS	SPE	New Jersey	A-05	8/21/07
Contreras, Amanda	GCES	ELE	Anne Arundel Co.	A-08	8/21/07
Cummins, Meredith	RES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Davis, Shannon	MHHS	ENG	Nebraska	B-05	8/21/07
Day, Lisa	SES/LoES	ECE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Dearstine, Thomas	APL	AUTO	Montgomery Co.	A-12	8/21/07
Dospil-Farley, Loretta	RHS	SPE (6-Adult)	South Carolina	C-15	8/21/07
Eisemann, Elizabeth	WLHS	MAT	--	A-01	8/21/07
Ferrara, Leslie	CRS	ELE	Montgomery Co.	A-07	8/21/07
Freeman, Maria	CRS	ELE	HCPSS - Substitute	A-07	8/21/07
Goodwin, Kelly	DRES	ELE	Anne Arundel Co.	A-04	8/21/07
Grady-Johnson, Michele	Unassign.	ELE	Baltimore City	C-15	8/21/07
Green, Jacqueline	GES	ECE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Gresick, Matthew	RHS	SST	Wicomico County	A-06	8/21/07
Hamilton, Latisha	MHMS	FACS	--	A-01	8/21/07
Harris, Amy	VES	ELE	Montgomery Co.	C-04	8/21/07
Harrington, Ashley	HOME	GUI	--	C-01	8/21/07
Harkness, Christina	Unassign.	ECE	Private School	A-07	8/21/07
Hawkins, Caryn	MHS	MAT	--	C-01	8/21/07
Hedden, Sara	BPES/DOESELE		Private School	A-03	8/21/07
Hensley, Michael	OMHS	MAT	--	C-01	8/21/07
Heger, Wendy	BSES	ELE	Baltimore City	C-09	8/21/07
Hill-Dukehart, Cortney	GHS	SST	--	A-01	8/21/07
Hines, Alison	CCES	SPE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Johnson, Philip	GHS	SCI	Montgomery Co.	A-11	8/21/07
Jones, Kelly	EES	ECE	Montgomery Co.	A-03	8/21/07
Kahn, Judith	NES	ECE	HCPSS	C-10	8/21/07
Kilberg, Michael	CLES	ELE	HCPSS – IA	C-05	8/21/07

Kim, Esther	OMMS	SPE (1-12)	--	A-01	8/21/07
Lawn, Nicole	THES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Lammons, Kaija	MWMS	MAT	--	A-01	8/21/07
Maple, Jenna	MWMS	MAT	--	A-01	8/21/07
Marshall, Courtney	Unassign.	RDG SPE	Delaware	C-14	8/21/07
Martin, Angela	RHS	MAT	Dept of Defense	A-07	8/21/07
Mason, Cristina	HoHS	SCI	Fairfax, VA	C-02	8/21/07
Matula, Melissa	TRES	ELE	Private School	A-05	8/21/07
Mehta, Anjana	RHS	SPE (K-12)	Michigan	D-08	8/21/07
Miller, Joelle	RHHS	SCI	Montgomery Co.	D-11	8/21/07
Mooney, Andrea	DRES	ALT ED	--	C-01	8/21/07
Moore, Michelle	HHS	MAT	Charles County	A-04	8/21/07
O'Bryan, Sari	CES/CLES	MUS	Baltimore County	B-08	8/21/07
Oppong, Martha	WLMS	ESOL	HCPSS – IA	A-03	8/21/07
Pazornik, Stephanie	Unassign.	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Percaciante, Jacklyn	ELMS	SPE (K-12)	--	A-01	8/21/07
Perlick, Jennifer	BBMS	ENG	Woodstock, VA	A-03	8/21/07
Pfeffer, Justin	LiES/HES	PE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Pfenninger, Rebecca	RES	ELE	Anne Arundel	C-06	8/21/07
Polek, Meghan	GES	ELE	--	C-01	8/21/07
Rausenberger, Carolyn	GCES	ECE	Mont. Co.	A-04	8/21/07
Reitz, Jessica	LRHS	SST	--	A-01	8/21/07
Renda, Karen	SFES	ELE	--	C-01	8/21/07
Reynolds, Karen	CHS/RHS	SCI	Baltimore County	A-07	8/21/07
Rhodes, Smirti	ELMS	MAT	HCPSS – IA	C-07	8/21/07
Riley, Megan	HES/PHES	ART	Fairfax, VA	A-12	8/21/07
Riley, Stefanie	Unassign.	ENG	Baltimore County	D-04	8/21/07
Sachs, Nancy	AHS	MAT	HCPSS	D-13	8/21/07
Sauer, Danielle	HoHS	SST	West Windsor, NJ	C-07	8/21/07
Scott, Romy	WLMS	PE	Anne Arundel Co.	C-12	8/21/07
Simcock, Carrie	RES	ELE	Anne Arundel Co.	C-09	8/21/07
Smith, Lovina	MHHS	ENG	--	A-01	8/21/07
Sneller, Allison	MHHS	HEA	HCPSS	C-07	8/21/07
Stepniak, Nina	GHS	MAT	Private College	C-07	8/21/07
Tate, Lindsay	JHES	ELE	Smyrna, TN	C-02	8/21/07
Volpe, Katherine	WLHS	SST	--	A-01	8/21/07
Wallen, Laura	MHMS	SST	--	A-01	8/21/07
Wellen, Emily	BSES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Wentworth, Russell	RHS	MAT	Baltimore County	D-15	8/21/07
Wenzel, Lisa	IES/RES	ELE	Baltimore City	C-06	8/21/07
Wiencek, Susan	HHS	MAT	Swiftwater, PA	A-02	8/21/07
Wilson, Monica	VES	ELE	--	C-01	8/21/07
Wolf, Laura	VES	ART	--	A-01	8/21/07

Yekscoe-Markle, Meredith	WES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07
Zeruto, Jessica	GES	ELE	--	A-01	8/21/07

*Leaves of Absence:*

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Years in Howard County	Effective Date
Chesnut, Alexa	PLES	Spec. Ed.	8.0	08/21/07
DeGeorge, Kara	EES	Elem. Ed.	3.0	08/21/07
Gunding, Jennifer	BSES	Elem. Ed.	7.0	08/21/07
Harris, Haleh	GMS	English	3.0	08/21/07
Hauserman, Kim	RES	Elem. Ed.	4.0	08/21/07
Hess, Carolyn	ReHS	Spec. Ed.	4.0	08/21/07
Honza, Lauren	FES	Elem Ed.	4.0	08/21/07
Ives, Marisa	MHMS	Math	7.0	08/21/07
Manfred, Jacquelyn	FRES	Elem. Ed.	7.0	08/21/07
Oak, Melissa	ELMS	Counselor	13.0	07/16/07
Parypinski, Rebecca	BSES	Elem. Ed.	5.0	08/21/07
Payne, Karen	DRES	Elem. Ed.	5.0	08/21/07
Philippe-Pierre, Monique	WLHS	Soc. Studies	11.0	08/21/07
Semenick, Angela	PLES	Elem. Ed.	4.0	08/21/07
Tanzi, Jennifer	MHHS	English	2.0	08/21/07
Warthen, Jessica	GMS	English	2.0	08/21/07

*Retirements:*

Name	School	Grade or Subject	Years in Howard County	Effective Date
Blanchard, Douglas	WVES	Music	32.0	07/01/07
Buxton, Lucy	MHHS`	Forg. Lang	6.0	07/01/07
Corkran, Richard	HOHS	Math	31.0	07/01/07
Girardi, Nicholas	CLS	Principal	22.0	07/01/07
Pisano, Leonor	LIES	Art	31.0	07/01/07
Vascholz, Hope	HAHS	English	29.5	07/01/07

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-1	Student Transportation	
	JC Bus Company	\$55,215.00
	Frank Hunt	58,320.00
	Skinner Transportation	69,840.00
	Adkins Enterprises	71,640.00
	Ashwell Transportation, Inc.	127,980.00
	Woodlawn Motor Coach, Inc.	133,895.80
	Bowens Bus Service	<u>293,908.30</u>
	TOTAL	\$810,799.10

P-2	Student Transportation	
	Shirley Baker	\$57,600
	MBG Enterprises	<u>63,000</u>
	TOTAL	\$120,000
P-3	Service And Preventive Maintenance And Food Service Refrigeration Equip. Quick Servant Company, Inc.	\$174,000

Harriet Tubman Building/Atholton HS Deed of Easement – Approved by the Board.

Sale Contract Addendum for Land Transfer – St. John's Baptist Church – Approved by the Board.

Donations – Approved by the Board.

Bollman Bridge Elementary: Holmes Lawn Care, landscaping, valued at \$2,400.

PTA, purchase of science fair ribbons, and school planners for students, and the cost of an anti-bullying assembly and fees for two Artist in Residency programs, valued at \$6,022.

Longfellow Elementary: PTA, in the amount of \$747.38, designated to offset expenses of year-end activities, the Philadelphia trip, and the closing ceremony.

Elkridge Landing Middle: Giant Food, in the amount of \$2,140.81, designated for the purchase of student agenda books.

Ellicott Mills Middle: ESCRIP, in the amount of \$2,850.76, designated to support student activities and purchase classroom supplies.

Giant Food, in the amount of \$1,426.08, designated for student support and supplies.

PTA, in the amount of \$6,470.86, with \$2,970.86 designated for student planners and \$3,500 to fund the after-school activity bus.

Atholton High: Gagnon Engineering, in the amount of \$520, designated for SAT classroom software and books.

Centennial High: Boosters, in the amount of \$11,649, designated for uniforms and equipment for the following athletic

programs: \$1,839 for field hockey; \$780 for boys' cross country, \$2,750 for girls cross county, \$3,955 for football, and \$2,325 for girls' soccer.

Northrop Grumman, in the amount of \$1,000, designated for the science program.

Howard High:

Giant Food, in the amount of \$3,637.86, designated for classroom supplies for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team.

Northrop Grumman, in the amount of \$1,000, designated to support the Career Connections program.

Long Reach High:

Anonymous, in the amount of \$2,000, designated to support the Renaissance program and student achievement.

Chris Monroe, warm ups for the boys' basketball team, valued at \$3,000.

Giant Food, in the amount of \$1,482.69, designated for the purchase of a laptop computer.

Northrop Grumman, in the amount of \$1,000, designated for technology teaching tools.

Marriotts Ridge High:

Boosters, in the amount of \$688.68, designated for spring athletic awards.

Sam's Club Foundation, in the amount of \$1,000, designated for the purchase of equipment for the science department.

Mt. Hebron High:

HCYP, in the amount of \$1,500, designated to partially offset the cost of a new scoreboard.

Reservoir High:

Class of 2007, in the amount of \$17,659.04, with \$9,916.21 designated for the purchase of cameras and camcorders for various classes and sports; \$1,200 designated for media center cameras; and \$6,542.83 to partially offset the cost of a new scoreboard.

Music Boosters, in the amount of \$14,692, designated for supplies, equipment and transportation for the Marching Band, Indoor Drumline, and Winter Guard.

River Hill High: Paul Barcomb, in the amount of \$654, designated for the purchase of new pom uniforms and pom poms.

Giant Food, in the amount of \$4,341.10, designated for the purchase of computer equipment to be used in the music tech lab.

Wilde Lake High: Northrop Grumman, in the amount of \$1,000, designated for the MESA program to promote engineering careers.

### **Policy Adoption Schedule – 2007/2008**

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

Mrs. Caplan presented the report on behalf of Mrs. Ellen Miller, Policy Specialist. The proposed schedule reflects a six-year review cycle, resulting in an annual revision list of approximately 15 policies.

Board approval was requested for the following policies to be reviewed out of sequence: Policies 5000, 5220, 9220, 9380, and 10040. Mrs. Mikulis noted that some of the policies that will be reviewed more frequently are Acceptable Use of Computer Technology and Parent, Family, and Community Involvement.

Mrs. French indicated the need to include the Ombudsman Policy (1005) to the list. Mrs. Mikulis commented that the Ombudsman Policy was written for a brand new position, and with a couple of years experience with the position, this would be a good time to review the policy.

Ms. Gordon, Mrs. Giles, and Mrs. French agreed to review the policy and bring recommendations back to the Board for consideration.

*Action:* Mrs. Giles moved approval of the review of the following policies out of sequence: 5000, 5220, 9220, 9380, 10040, and the Ombudsman Policy (1005). The motion was seconded by Mr. Aquino and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

### **Candid Conversations with Teachers**

*Presenter:* Dr. Sydney Cousin and Mrs. Sandra Erickson.

During the 2006/2007 school year, the Superintendent held a series of Candid Conversations with Teachers to provide him an opportunity to meet directly with teachers and to solicit feedback on what is working well in the system, what needs to be improved, and what will move the system from “good to great.” Chief of Staff Mamie Perkins and Deputy Superintendent Sandra Erickson also attended the sessions. Feedback from the sessions was shared with members of the Executive Team and School Support Team. These Central Office leaders used the information to guide improvement efforts.

The face-to-face meetings provided the senior staff with the opportunity to converse informally with the teachers and hear, first hand, their needs as well as their heartwarming gratitude for the high quality features of the HCPSS. As repeatedly reflected in the teachers' feedback, the time spent with the Superintendent and other system leaders was greatly appreciated, and the information gleaned proved to be a valuable source of qualitative data for all levels of school system leaders.

Teachers indicated that the following things are working well:

- Professional Development
- Staffing Support
- Curricular Programs
- Communication Tools
- Central Office Support
- New Teacher Support
- Leadership Opportunities
- Sense of Community

They indicated that they would like to see the following improvements:

- Additional Staffing
- Curriculum Changes
- Assessment Changes
- Planning Time
- Professional Development
- Substitute Teachers

To move the system from "Good to Great," teachers suggested:

- Streamlining Curriculum
- Expanding co-teaching
- Math Intervention
- Stability in Administration
- Continue Listening to Teachers

Mrs. Erickson reported on the steps taken to address a number of suggestions teachers had for improvement. She expressed appreciation to all the teachers who took the time to meet with staff after school to take part in the survey. The Superintendent will continue the Candid Conversation sessions next year.

In response to Ms. Gordon, Mrs. Erickson stated that an additional instructional assistant has been included for every grade at the elementary level to help with the co-teaching program.

Staff agreed to provide all the information obtained from the survey to the Board members. Copies of the report will also be provided to the teachers who participated.

Board members commented on the value of this information and expressed appreciation to all who took part in the surveys. Mrs. Erickson stated that different teachers would be asked to respond in the future, and staff is also considering meeting with other employee groups.

Mrs. Mikulis indicated a need to also focus on issues related to improving the quality of substitute teachers. Dr. Cousin pointed out that there are some days when there are not enough substitute teachers to cover classes, and staff will work on issues related to both quality and quantity. He noted that provisions allow instructional assistants to substitute for teachers in emergency situations.

## **Bridge to Excellence**

### Maryland School Assessment (MSA) Report

*Presenter:* Ms. Terry Alban, Director of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation.

Ms. Alban reported that in every grade, more than 70 percent of HCPSS students scored at proficient or above in reading and mathematics on the 2007 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for elementary and middle schools — an accomplishment that few systems in the state could match. In addition to exceeding the proficiency standards established by the state of Maryland, Ms. Alban noted that every elementary and middle school met or exceeded the rigorous local standard of having 70 percent of students scoring at or above proficient in reading.

Every elementary school and most middle schools met the local standard in mathematics, an area where much progress was made and scores increased significantly. The impressive growth in performance on the MSA over four years was largest for African American, Hispanic, and special services student groups.

Students in Grade 4 demonstrated exemplary performance as every student group met the local target of 70 percent at proficient or advanced in Grade 4 reading. Performance on the Alternative MSA showed impressive gains, and HCPSS students continue to perform at the advanced level on the MSA in higher percentages than students around the state.

Principal Jonathan Davis and several staff members from Swansfield ES reported on strategies they used to improve student performance.

#### *Key Highlights:*

- Overall, 88 percent of HCPSS students reached proficiency in reading and 85 percent in mathematics.
- All elementary schools met the county standard of 70 percent proficient or above in both reading and mathematics.
- All middle schools met the Howard County standard in reading. In mathematics, 14 middle schools met the county standard.

*Discussion:*

Ms. Gordon congratulated staff on having a heterogeneous style of teaching. Staff noted that professional development will help teachers plan for teaching heterogeneous classes with homogeneous groupings within the classes. It was also pointed out that one team has expressed a desire to have a wide range of learning levels in a classroom so that students who are performing below grade level can benefit from peers who are performing at higher levels. Professional development will also help teachers plan for these types of groupings.

Mr. Cohen commended Mr. Davis for the accomplishments that have been made at Swansfield ES. Board members expressed appreciation to Mr. Davis for sharing this information with the Board.

Data Summary for Policy 13111 – Religious Observances

*Presenter:* Ms. Terry Alban, Director of Student Assessment and Program Evaluation.

Ms. Alban presented a summary of the data collected regarding student religious observance during school hours. Data indicate that there is no negative impact on students when they leave class for religious observances. Overall, less than 1 percent of the HCPSS student population leaves school or class for religious observances. Approximately 35 students either leave school or report to a designated area in the school to pray. Students who left class to pray in a designated area of their school missed approximately 20 minutes of class time. The Policy on Religious Observances will be presented to the Board in August with recommended changes from staff.

*Discussion:*

Ms. Alban explained that a form has been developed that covers all types of absences, including those for religious purposes, and must be signed by a parent/guardian. These forms are submitted on a weekly basis.

Mrs. Sue Mascaro, noted that the Board had asked for one year of data collection, which will be reported with recommendations at the next Board meeting. No public comment, suggestions, or complaints have been received regarding the policy, and it does not appear that any changes have occurred in the number of students requesting absences for prayer.

Mrs. Linda Wise, Assistant Superintendent for School Administration, stated that administrators worked with students and parents, and locations for students to pray in school were identified in a variety of ways.

Dr. Siddiqui expressed appreciation to everyone involved in this process and stated that she was reassured that the findings indicated that there was not an overall significant

impact on achievement for students leaving for prayer. She noted that the key to success is communication between students, teachers, principals, and school staff. Dr. Siddiqui stated that she was impressed by the teachers who took the opportunity to learn this policy and have discussions with other students in class about tolerance.

Dr. Cousin stated that the policy will be brought back to the Board in August with recommended changes based on these findings.

### **Scheduling**

The Board scheduled upcoming meetings and events.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 6:12 p.m.

### **Information Items**

- A. Food and Nutrition Service Monthly Financial Report
- B. Noncertificated Retirements
- C. Summary of the Accomplishments of Class of 2007