

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

**September 7, 2007**

The members of the Board of Education of Howard County held a retreat on Friday, September 7, 2007, at 2:00 p.m., in the Chesapeake Room of the Faulkner Ridge Center, 10598 Marble Faun Court, Columbia, MD 21044. The meeting was open to the public. 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.  
Kitty Blumsack, Facilitator, Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)  
Sydney L. Cousin, Superintendent  
Sandra J. Erickson, Deputy Superintendent  
Mamie J. Perkins, Chief of Staff  
Florence Jackson, Board of Education Office  
Barbara Bowers, Board of Education Office

Chairman Mikulis called the meeting to order at approximately 2:19 p.m. and gave opening remarks.

Dr. Cousin, Mrs. Erickson, and Mrs. Perkins reviewed the school system's organizational charts and noted additions.

Mrs. Mikulis requested that the Board members receive a copy of the organizational phone list. Dr. Cousin said he would look into updating a phone book which is alphabetical by function.

Mrs. French asked how the needs of the schools were being met. Dr. Cousin and Mrs. Erickson briefly explained the Differentiated Support/Resources for the schools. Schools are not labeled. Two schools are still in school improvement, and some schools are still on alert. Action Plans, which are currently in place for schools that are in need, will be provided to Board members.

Mrs. Erickson introduced Dr. Terry Alban, Executive Director, Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation. Dr. Alban reviewed the Organizational Chart – Appendix 3.

Approved – October 11, 2007

## **Policy Committee**

Policy Advisory Committee consists of:

- Staff.
- Community representatives.
- Ombudsman.
- Policy Liaison – two Board members.

### Committee Memberships

#### Audit Committee

Ms. Gordon  
Mr. Cohen  
Mrs. Giles

#### Legislative Liaisons

Mrs. French  
Mrs. Giles  
Mr. Aquino

#### District Planning Committee

Mrs. Mikulis  
Mr. Cohen  
Dr. Siddiqui  
District Staff  
School Staff  
Community  
CAC – Community Advisory Council  
PTA  
Equity Council

#### Policy Liaisons

Ms. Gordon  
Mrs. French  
Other Board members can provide input or  
be asked for input.

## **Strategic Planning Committee**

Dr. Alban distributed a draft copy of the Howard County Board of Education Strategic Planning Committee for review/discussion.

### Options

District Planning Committee (existing)

- Broaden to include more Board members.
- Review to determine future needs.

The Board will monitor the planning and focus on facilities and curriculum. Goals will be to determine how priorities are set and to establish parameters.

### Master Planning Process

- Broaden to include operations.
- This is a responsibility of the Superintendent.

## **MABE Master Board Program**

The Board decided that they and the Superintendent would participate in the MABE Master Board Program at the cost of \$1,000.00. It was suggested that senior staff members be part of this program as well.

## **Handbook Update Timeline**

Mrs. Mikulis noted that the handbook needs updating since the Board increased to seven members, and the student member received limited voting rights. The chapters were divided up among Board members to review and give input as follows:

- Chapter I – Mrs. Mikulis.
- Chapter II – Mr. Aquino.
- Chapter III – Mrs. Giles.
- Chapter IV – Ms. Gordon.
- Chapter V – Mrs. French.
- Chapter VI – Dr. Siddiqui.
- Chapter VII – Mr. Cohen.
- Chapter VIII – Mr. Gavelek.
- Chapter IX – Mrs. Shown.

### Timeline:

- Board members will provide their input to the Committee by October 2, 2007.
- The committee will provide draft revisions to the Board members by November 15.
- Final changes will be presented for approval at the Board meeting on December 13, 2007.

Mrs. Mikulis, Mrs. Giles, Ms. Gordon, Mrs. Erickson, and Mrs. Perkins agreed to be members of the committee.

## **Board Self-Evaluation**

Ms. Blumsack distributed to the Board members two different sheets - “Board Self Assessment” and “Possible Self-Evaluation Areas”. The Board members, Superintendent, and senior staff members were divided into three groups. Each group answered the questions on each sheet, followed by a full group discussion. The four areas to be worked on include:

- Communication
- Alignment
- Board and Staff Relations
- Community Relations

### **Retreat Evaluation**

Board members evaluated the retreat process and outcomes and made suggestions for future retreats such as:

- Shorten the length of the retreat.
- Delegate drafting the agenda – Mr. Aquino will draft the agenda for the next retreat.
- Develop leadership within the Board.

### **Adjournment**

The retreat concluded at 5:30 p.m., and Board members agreed to finish other agenda items before the regular Board meeting on September 20, 2007.

Mrs. Mikulis reconvened the retreat at 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, September 20, 2007.

### **Language Immersion Schools**

A language immersion program was discussed. Ms. Gordon said she was a proponent for this type of program. Mrs. Erickson said she would ask Ms. Deborah Espitia, World Languages/ESOL, to look at offering foreign language at the elementary school level. She suggested starting the program at grade 4 or 5, but the concept is about three years away. Mrs. Erickson also noted that it would be about a year and a half before staff brings it up at a Board of Education meeting.

### **Communication**

Mr. Aquino and Mr. Cohen discussed the idea of Board members having office hours and would look into this consideration.

Dr. Siddiqui noted that last minute communication from staff on the day of a Board meeting was not effective. Mrs. Perkins said that when board members ask questions late, there is a turn around time from staff. Mrs. Erickson suggested putting a hard copy of late questions and answers at the Board's individual places before the meeting. Mrs. French requested that Board members do not read e-mail during a public meeting.

### **Technology**

Board members asked for more of an explanation under the Technology category.

### **Middle Schools**

Dr. Cousin said there have been sessions among middle school administrators to develop more common standards and consistency among schools. Mrs. Erickson said

that more experienced teachers for after-school programs are needed. She said that in the spring staff will update the Board on middle school issues. Mrs. Mikulis would like to see tuition included in the after-school programs. Mrs. Erickson said Mr. Mark Blom, General Counsel, would need to be consulted about this idea.

### **School Calendar**

Board members asked for more of an explanation under the School Calendar category.

### **Capital Investment**

Capital Investment (sources of capital funding, and facility needs) is ongoing.

### **Hiring and Retaining**

Mrs. Mikulis said we want the best teachers for the students.

**Adjournment:** Mrs. Mikulis adjourned the retreat at 3:57 p.m.