

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

November 29, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on November 29, 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
Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Andrew Gavelek, Student Member

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

Chairman Diane Mikulis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., and Manu Anjanappa, Mt. Hebron HS student, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Approval of Agenda

The following changes were made to the agenda:

Add: Item IX.B – Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum – HCEA (Howard County Education Association).

Add: Item IX.C – Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum – ESP (Educational Support Personnel).

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

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin extended condolences to the family of Brandon, Meghan and David Brockdorff, on behalf of the Board and the school system. He commended the members of the Crisis Intervention Team and Central Office staff, who provided support to Lisbon ES and Glenwood MS. He also commended Principals Jayne Diggs, Rick Wilson, and their staff members for an outstanding job of responding to the difficult situation with compassion and sensitivity.

Dr. Cousin congratulated Mabrooka Chaudhry as a 2007 Milken Award recipient. The award recognizes educators who use effective instructional practices to achieve positive learning results; who are models of excellence for the professions; and who engage and inspire students, colleagues, and the community.

Mrs. Erickson reported on the results of AP (Advanced Placement) exams for 2007. Students from every student group are taking advantage of this challenging opportunity. In 2007, 3,466 students (22 percent of high school students) enrolled in AP courses. Nearly one quarter of these students are taking rigorous courses that are designed to reflect college level skills. Taking the AP exam is optional. A score of 3 or higher indicates satisfactory performance at a college level, and many colleges offer credit to students scoring a 3 or higher. In 2007, of the 5,333 AP exams taken, 78 percent scored a 3 or higher, while more than half of the scores were at a 4 or higher. This reflects an incredible achievement by the students and their teachers.

Student Representative's Report

Ms. Nicole Nussbaum, Atholton HS; Mr. Alexander Kolodner, Wilde Lake HS; Mr. Manu Anjanappa, Mt. Hebron HS; and Mr. Nathan D'Amico, Atholton HS, reported on a Leadership U presentation entitled "Peas On Earth." Their goal is to start the dialogue for improving the healthful benefits of the Howard County school lunch program and to promote awareness of healthy food options to Howard County high school students. The results of the school lunch survey included:

- 860 students answered the survey.
- 48% of the students ate the school lunches.
- Only 2% of the students gave an "A" grade on the lunches that are currently being offered.
- 37% would be willing to pay more for healthier lunches.

- The main course is the least favorite part of school lunches.
- Side items offered are the most favorite part of school lunches.
- 71% feel their school lunches are unhealthy.
- 50% feel the school lunches do not curb their hunger.

Suggestions included:

- Include diverse vegetarian/vegan options daily.
- Provide more complex carbs – switch to whole-grain bread/pasta products.
- Reduce/eliminate heavily processed canned food items.
- Offer fresh vegetables – steamed and/or raw.
- Offer fresh fruit options daily.
- Offer beverages other than milk products – water, 100% fruit juice.
- Provide the nutritional facts of lunch menu items.
- Involve parents in supporting and promoting healthy food choices.
- Provide students with resources to make healthy eating a life lesson.

Dr. Cousin stated that he would have Mrs. Klatko, Director of Food and Nutritional Services, meet with their team.

Mrs. Mikulis suggested the team contact the PTA Council to make their presentation.

Board Members' Reports

Mrs. Mikulis congratulated Dr. Cousin for being the recipient of the Howard I. Cornish Appreciation Award from the Metropolitan Baltimore Chapter of the Morgan State University Alumni Association.

Mrs. Mikulis expressed appreciation to the Board, Superintendent, and staff for their continuous support and assistance during her year as Chairman of the Board of Education. She noted that election of new officers for the Board will take place at the meeting of December 13, 2007.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Aquino thanked Mrs. Mikulis for her support, particularly on behalf of new Board members. All Board members, including the Student Member, expressed appreciation and gratitude to Mrs. Mikulis for her invaluable experience and knowledge.

Appointment – Council of Elders Partnership Year-End Report

Elder Natalie Woodson, representing the Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County, presented the year-end report on the partnership between the Council and HCPSS. She said their goal is to have 50 percent of African American students in Howard County reach the advanced level on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) tests. Their last celebration honored nearly 1,400 students for outstanding performance on the 2007 MSAs.

Mrs. Mikulis and Dr. Cousin acknowledged the benefits of the Council and thanked them for the work they do every day to help children become better citizens.

Consent Agenda – General

Minutes of October 10, 2007 (Board of Education County Council Quarterly Meeting); November 8, 2007 (Regular Meeting); Donations.

Action: Dr. Siddiqui moved approval of the Consent Agenda with the amended minutes of November 8, 2007. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Minutes of October 10, 2007 (Board of Education and County Council Quarterly Meeting) and Minutes of November 8, 2007 (Regular Meeting) – Approved by the Board.

Donations – Approved by the Board.

Manor Woods ES: PTA, in the amount of \$888, designated for the Cultural Arts Program “Young Audiences of Maryland-Downtown Rhythm Express.”

Folly Quarter MS: Mr. Mark A. Stull of SunTrust Investment Services, in the amount of \$2,000, designated for the Robotics Club.

Glenelg HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$3,596.50, designated for the following athletic teams: boys and girls basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, boys and girls lacrosse, field hockey, and football.

- Hammond HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$4,825, (\$525) designated to purchase pen and pencil sets for Tech Ed, and (\$4,300) designated to purchase new banners for the gym.
- Long Reach HS: Ms. Marchia Grusenmeyer, in the amount of \$500, designated to assist with fees for a band competition.
- Marriotts Ridge HS: Discovery Communications, Inc., in the amount of \$1,000, designated for scholarships for students in the Student Art Program.
- Oakland Mills HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$17,765, (\$11,400) designated for the purchase of uniforms and equipment for various athletic teams, and (\$6,115) designated for the following clubs: Student Support Center, Art Honor Society, Journalism, ESOL, Science Pilot Program; and (\$300) designated for student recognition activities for honor roll students.
- Target, in the amount of \$720.76, designated for student activities and community outreach.
- Reservoir HS: Premier Soccer Potential, in the amount of \$900, designated for soccer bags for the girls soccer team.

Consent Agenda – Restricted*

Action: Mr. Aquino moved approval of the Restricted Consent Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Giles and approved by the members of the Board (6/0).

Bids and Contracts; Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum – HCEA; and Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum - ESP.

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-1 EMJAY Engineering and Construction Co. \$133,467

Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum – HCEA – Approved by the Board.

Ratification of Representation Fee Addendum – ESP – Approved by the Board.

Bridge to Excellence: Annual Goal 2 Progress Report

Presenter: Dr. Theresa Alban, Executive Director of Strategic Planning, Assessment and Program Evaluation.

Dr. Alban presented a progress report on the school system's Goal 2 and data related to attendance, student behavior, and school environments. All elementary, 18 middle, and 9 high schools met the state's satisfactory standard for attendance. A total of 28 schools achieved the excellent standard with attendance rates of 96 percent or higher.

A review of suspension rates indicates that over 94 percent of HCPSS students follow policies and engage in safe behavior. The suspension rate is 5.6 percent at the high school level, 5.5 percent at the middle school level, and less than one percent at the elementary level.

Overall, the HCPSS School Environment Survey, which measured the perceptions of students, staff, and community in five key areas (welcoming environment, physical environment, discipline, nurturing environment, and diversity/commonality) yielded positive results. At all three levels, questions regarding student discipline in schools drew the fewest positive responses from staff but received the most positive responses from parents.

Homewood Center Principal Tina Maddox and Special Education teacher Ken Katzen reported on strategies that have produced positive academic and behavioral changes among students in the Center's programs. Data show that attendance has increased, habitual truancy has decreased, and suspensions are down. School environment survey results measure perceptions among all groups across all five key areas.

Discussion:

Board members thanked Mrs. Maddox and her staff for their work at the Homewood Center. Dr. Alban clarified for Mrs. Mikulis that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides the

definition of safe schools. Dr. Siddiqui commented on the low survey response rate submitted by parents.

Mrs. French asked if anyone has questioned why the "disagree" responses increased under the Diversity & Commonality survey results between school year 2006 and 2007. Dr. Alban reported that Mr. Julian Katz, Coordinator, Research and Program Evaluation, is in the process of performing an item analysis and looking at exactly how many schools increased or decreased in the categories in this particular area.

FY2009 State Capital Budget/IAC Appeal*

Presenter: Mr. Roey, Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management.

Mr. Roey presented to the Board for their approval the list of projects to be appealed to the State Interagency Committee (IAC) on December 3, 2007.

Action: Mrs. French moved approval of the list of projects to be appealed to the State Interagency Committee. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Giles and approved by the members of the Board (6/0).

Glenelg HS Drama Addition – Approval of Design Development/Construction Documents*

Presenter: Mr. Roey, Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management.

Mr. Roey, with assistance from Mr. James Emr of Smolen & Emr Associates Architects, described the new addition and renovations to the existing auditorium complex at Glenelg HS. Proposed improvements use the current General Educational Specifications for New High Schools as a guideline. The project base bid includes the additions of a workshop, drama room, toilet and changing facilities, and a rear stage connecting hallway. These additions will unify and consolidate the performing arts department to one location in the school. Project alternates include a parking lot expansion, adding an additional dance room, interior stage work, and replacing the existing operable partitions. Improvements to the current design include bringing the area up to required ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

compliance. The current ADA lift located at the front of the stage will be replaced by an elevated walkway.

Discussion:

Mrs. French asked for and received clarification on the proposed alternate descriptions. Mr. Roey assured Mrs. French that he would work together with the school to make a good decision at the time of award. Dr. Cousin added that the Board will have the opportunity to accept or reject add/alternates at the time of bid approval.

Mr. Aquino asked why another dance room is being built when a dance room already exists. Mr. Roey explained that the current dance room is shared with the wrestling team, and this was the approach under the original design.

Mrs. Mikulis asked for an update on the HVAC upgrade. Mr. Roey stated that last summer one chiller was replaced. The contract to replace the second chiller has just been awarded. The two chillers collectively will bring another 200 tons of chiller capacity the school. A proposal will be forthcoming for other improvements needed at the school. Funds for these additional improvements may or may not come from the existing budget. Mrs. Mikulis reiterated that the goal is to make the school temperatures more uniform.

Mr. Aquino inquired about the proposed parking lot addition and what affect it will have regarding the space that will be used. Mr. Roey said that currently the proposed additional parking lot would encroach upon the field hockey field. The space is currently being used as overflow parking space. Mrs. Mikulis added that there is a concern for adequate parking, especially with students being allowed to drive to school.

Action: Mrs. Giles moved approval of the Design Development and Construction Documents for the Glenelg HS addition. The motion was seconded by Mrs. French and approved by the members of the Board (6/0).

In response to Mrs. French, Mr. Roey stated that there will be 63 teaching stations when all additions are completed. If enrollment exceeds capacity, there may be a need for a portable classroom. This is not a reflection of poor planning. Mrs. French pointed out that if high schools start being built according to actual population, then the

Board-approved guidelines for capacity (1332) will arbitrarily be increased, which is not the Board's intent.

The 1332 program capacity was established to ensure equity and uniform program delivery. If capacity is increased and actual enrollment exceeds that capacity, it will result in very large high school populations, which is not what the Board approved.

Scheduling

The Board scheduled meetings and other activities.

Recess: The meeting was recessed at 5:55 p.m. by the Chairman and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Appointment – Community Advisory Council (CAC) Monthly Report

As the newly appointed CAC Chairman, Mr. Chris Wertman provided information on his personal background as well as goals for the CAC over the next year. He indicated his interest in expanding programs and outreach efforts implemented by former CAC Chairmen by bringing in more community participants from a variety of organizations which either may have an interest in or resources to support students and staff.

Public Hearing – Policy 2030 – Ombudsman

Mr. Chris Wertman, CAC Chairman

- Expressed CAC support for recommended changes to the policy.
- Asked that consideration be given to restoring language related to the Ombudsman working directly for the Board.
- Stated that changes in expectations for confidentiality will encourage members of the community to utilize the Ombudsman to facilitate resolution of problems and potential conflict with less concern regarding potential retaliation.
- Expressed confidence in Ms. Rose Dennison, former CAC Chairman and new Ombudsman, to serve as an excellent liaison to the community.

Announcement – Board Member Election

Mrs. Mikulis announced that three Board seats will be open in the next election and reminded anyone interested in running for the Board of the upcoming registration deadline.

Public Hearing – Attendance Area Adjustments

Ms. Lisa Blodgett, Woodmark Community Member

- Requested that the Board provide bus service from the Woodmark Community to River Hill HS for the 2008/2009 school year.
- Requested that the Board renew the commitment to continue transportation services until the feed of less than three percent to Marriotts Ridge HS is fixed.
- Asked that the Woodmark Community (Polygons 180 and 181) be districted to River Hill HS during Attendance Area Adjustments for 2010.

Ms. Karin Seeley

- Asked that the Board not redistrict sophomores from Howard HS to Long Reach HS in 2010.
- Stated that problems high school transfer students may face include depression, a drop in grades, and changes in behavior to get attention.
- Spoke about the impact of splitting an older established community.
- Suggested that the JROTC program be moved from Howard HS to Long Reach HS.

Ms. Elizabeth Eggleston

- Stated that 691 homes are approved for construction within three miles of Elkridge ES, and a new high school is needed for the Elkridge area.
- Spoke against redistricting students from Howard HS to Long Reach HS in 2010 and noted that Long Reach MSA scores are 8.5 points lower than Howard HS on average.
- Stated that the proposal would cut her children's support system at the most important time in their academic careers, which will in turn threaten their education.
- Indicated that the Board must consider a more comprehensive plan that includes a new high school in order to really address long-term issues of overcrowding.

Ms. Melinda Fletcher

- Asked that the Board find an alternative solution to moving students from the Grant neighborhood in Hanover from Howard HS to Long Reach HS.
- Stated that they bought their house specifically because of the particular schools their children would attend (Elkridge ES, Elkridge Landing MS, and Howard HS).
- Indicated that they have resisted the temptation to relocate and take advantage of lower costs of living and taxes so that their children would be able to attend the highly ranked Howard HS.

Ms. Mary Ellen Long

- Spoke about the Greenbridge exception and asked that students currently attending River Hill HS from this area be allowed to remain at the school.
- Stated that the Board promised two years ago that whenever the Greenbridge exception was discontinued, that students would be allowed to remain at whichever high school they were enrolled.
- Urged the Board to take a reasonable approach, honor the agreement made two years ago, listen to staff recommendation, and allow children to stay at their current high schools.

Larry and Gail Pfeiffer

- Spoke in favor of redistricting the Greenbridge area back to Glenelg HS for the next school year.
- Cited the logistics of districting the Greenbridge area to Glenelg HS, including safety issues.
- Appealed to the Board to fulfill the promise made and restore Greenbridge to its neighborhood school, restore the sense of community, and do so in the coming school year.
- Asked that bus service be provided to students attending Glenelg HS until redistricting occurs.

Ms. Charlene Daniel-Green

- Discussed the feasibility study and how the proposed changes will impact the Elkridge/Hanover community.
- Spoke against the redistricting proposal to send 87 students in the Elkridge/Hanover area from Howard HS to Long Reach HS.
- Encouraged the board to reconsider this particular boundary move and wait until current major development initiatives are close to completion before making decisions on high school boundary lines.

Mr. Martin Rayner

- Spoke about the feasibility study for Howard and Long Reach high schools.
- Expressed concern about the frequency of redistricting and the resulting impact on students' academic progress.
- Asked the Board to reconsider the proposal to redistrict students from Howard HS to Long Reach HS.

Mr. Robert Blake

- Recommended that bus service to Glenelg HS be provided to the Heritage community.
- Stated that if the Board ultimately decides not to redistrict the entire Greenbridge exception area back to Glenelg HS, that consideration should at least be given to redistricting the Heritage area back to Glenelg, where the majority of families in the area are sending their children.

Johnnie Nussbaum, Glenelg HS PTSA President and Greenbridge Resident

- Expressed appreciation to the Board's Chairman for her service on behalf of all people in Howard County.
- On behalf of the Glenelg HS administration and PTSA, expressed support for the elimination of the exception and the movement of all Greenbridge exception students to Glenelg for the 2008/2009 school year.
- Encouraged the Board to consider one of two options: Send students to Glenelg in 2008 or provide the phase-out transportation as recommended by staff.

Mr. Dennis Ward

- Noted that he sends his children to private school for elementary and middle so that they will have continuity and not be subject to redistricting.
- Stated his belief that once students are in a particular school, especially at the high school level, that they should be allowed to continue at the same school until graduation.
- Suggested that reverse busing be considered, where students in the Heritage area receive busing and the Greenbridge students attending River Hill HS provide their own transportation.

Ms. Wendy Vorce

- Spoke in opposition of redistricting freshmen students once they have enrolled in a high school.

- Expressed concern that moving students can negatively affect their grades.

Ms. Karen Weiprecht

- Spoke against redistricting students from Howard HS to Long Reach HS.
- Noted that her children do not deal well with change and are very strict in their routine.
- Suggested that other areas be considered for redistricting, which may unify another community.

Mr. Hans Kratzmeier

- Asked that the Board consider splitting the Greenbridge exception area into two groups and look at them as communities rather than polygons.
- Indicated his preference to keep his children at Glenelg HS.
- Stated that it may be possible to develop polygons in the Greenbridge area where some would be districted to Glenelg and others districted to River Hill.

Mrs. Mikulis explained the difficulties Board members face when dealing with Attendance Area Adjustments and indicated that the Board understands the effects of redistricting on families.

Policy 2030 – Ombudsman

Presenter: Ms. Ellen Miller, Policy/Charter Schools Specialist.

Discussion:

Mr. Chris Wertman, CAC Chairman, clarified the CAC's concern about language related to the Ombudsman reporting directly to the Board and indicated the need for stronger language.

Mrs. Miller suggested appropriate language to indicate that the Ombudsman reports directly to the Board and will serve as a neutral party. Board members agreed to adding the language to the policy.

Mrs. Mikulis also suggested that the Board discuss the position in more detail during a retreat, specifically how the ombudsman is oriented and trained.

Mrs. Giles noted that in looking at this policy, part of the discussion involved the need to look at the formulation of a policy that relates to the functions and expectations of Board staff.

Action: Mrs. French moved adoption of Policy 2030 – Ombudsman, as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gavelek and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Attendance Area Adjustments Work Session

Presenters: Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director for Facilities, Planning and Management; and Mr. Joel Gallihue, Manager of School Planning.

Discussion:

Board members discussed the Greenbridge exception, where students are currently districted to River Hill HS pending completion of the Glenelg HS addition. Students residing in the Greenbridge area have been allowed to open enroll at Glenelg HS, without transportation, in anticipation that the area would be redistricted back to Glenelg once the addition was completed. The addition will be completed and ready for the 2008/2009 school year.

Staff has recommended that the Greenbridge exception be retained until comprehensive high school redistricting adjustments are made in 2010.

Board members discussed testimony received at the public hearing held earlier in the evening, which included various suggestions on how to provide transportation to both schools and allow students to remain in their current schools.

Board members also discussed items related to transportation issues and costs, phase-in/out options, ramifications to 2010 redistricting, and promises made to the Greenbridge community. The Board asked staff to develop recommendations regarding these issues.

Dr. Cousin clarified that staff's position is to do comprehensive redistricting once, which is the driver for making the recommendation to hold off on any other redistricting decisions until 2010, because the consequences of doing incremental and sometimes disjointed redistricting are unknown at this time.

Mrs. Mikulis also asked staff to provide hard copies of maps, broken down by polygons, showing where students are attending high school from the Greenbridge area. She suggested that Board members send requests for additional information needed to make a decision on the Greenbridge area to Mr. Gallihue; Mr. Roey; Mr. David Drown, Director of Transportation; and Mr. Ray Brown, Chief Operating Officer.

Mrs. French asked that Mr. Blom, General Counsel, be consulted to ensure that the Board is giving due legal notice to the public regarding any redistricting decisions that may be made for 2008.

Adjournment

Action: Mrs. Giles moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Information Items:

- A. Educational Foundation Annual Audit Report
- B. Participation and Performance in AP Courses and Exams for 2007

*Under Section 3-701 of the Education Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland*, the Student Member may not vote on these matters. Passage of a motion by the Board on these matters requires the affirmative vote of four (4) Board members.