

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

December 20, 2007

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on December 20, 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:

Frank J. Aquino, Chairman
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman
Lawrence H. Cohen
Sandra H. French
Patricia S. Gordon
Diane B. Mikulis
Janet Siddiqui, M.D. (left at 6:15 p.m.)
Andrew Gavelek, Student Member

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

Chairman Frank Aquino called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m., and Phil Lasser, HCASC (Howard County Association of Student Councils President), Atholton HS, 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:

- Move: Item XI. Appointment – Community Advisory Council Monthly Report to be presented after Item VI. Board Members' Reports.
- Pull for Discussion: Item VIII.A. Bids and Contracts.
- Add: Item VIII.C. FY 09 Capital Budget Appeal to the Board of Public Works – Action.

Approved – January 10, 2008

- Move: Item XIII. Update on RFP for Student Information System from Information Item to Item IX.D.

Action: Mrs. French moved approval of the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin congratulated Running Brook ES fifth-grade students Debbie Kim, Kameron Langford, and Autumn Myers for taking first place in the Teams Division for elementary school in the Stock Market Game sponsored by Morgan-Stanley and to their GT teacher, Melissa Peyton, who won first place in the adult division. He also recognized Lime Kiln MS Special Education teacher Melissa Preston for her selection as a 2008 Service Learning Fellow by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Student Representative's Report

Mr. Phil Lasser, HCASC President and Atholton HS student, reported on recent activities of HCASC:

- HCASC is in the process of implementing a project to support the Save Darfur organization. Profits from T-shirt sales will go directly to the Save Darfur organization.
- Every high school in Howard County is collecting coins that will be donated to the Children's Cancer Foundation.
- Some middle schools are participating in Bowl-a-Thons to raise money for the Children's Cancer Foundation.
- A major goal of HCASC for 2008 is to help middle schools develop active Student Government Associations (SGAs).

Board Members' Reports

No reports were presented.

Appointment – Community Advisory Council Monthly Report

Mr. Chris Wertman, CAC Chairman, reported that the council recently selected Mark Howard as Vice Chairman of the CAC.

Consent Agenda – General

Minutes of November 29, 2007 (Regular Meeting), and Donations.

Action: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the General Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Minutes of November 29, 2007 (Regular Meeting) – Approved by the Board.

Donations – Approved by the Board.

Centennial Lane ES: Towson University, in the amount of \$500, designated for the Parent-Child Cultural Connection Program.

Atholton HS: PTSA, in the amount of \$2401, (\$705) designated for the JROTC Program, and (\$1696) designated for various student clubs.

Marriotts Ridge HS: Mr. Waldemar Poppe, a Carl Zeiss Photomicroscope III valued at \$15,000, designated for the science department.

Boosters, in the amount of \$525, designated for the History Alive Program "Amelia Earhart-Dreams Take Flight."

Ms. Patrice Hall, clothing and props valued at \$812, designated for the Drama Program.

Mt. Hebron HS: Ms. Sally Fox Tennant, in the amount of \$565, designated for the purchase of football helmets.

River Hill HS: PTSA, in the amount of \$800, designated for the Safe School Ambassador Program.

Boosters, in the amount of \$1360, designated to purchase basketball equipment for the girls and boys basketball teams.

Consent Agenda – Restricted*

Bids and Contracts; Minutes of Closed Meeting of December 13, 2007 (Official and Confidential); and FY 09 State Capital Budget/Board of Public Works (BPW) Appeal.

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

| <u>Exhibit</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| P-1 | Renovation of Clemens Crossing ES Forrester Construction | \$ 9,444,077 |
| P-2 | Renovation of Waterloo ES Whiting-Turner Contracting Co. | \$11,215,000 |

Minutes of the Official and Confidential Closed Meeting of December 13, 2007 – Approved by the Board.

Dr. Cousin explained that the process used for systemic projects is different than normal procurement procedures for architects. He stated that the Board approved a list of architects several months ago that applied to these particular projects, and because these are systemic projects, the requirements are different than for major construction and renovation projects. He reported that staff will be looking at questions raised about these procedures and will report back to the Board and to the public of their findings and recommendations.

Mrs. Giles requested that the Interagency Committee (IAC) for Public School Construction list be pulled for a brief description of the difference in terms of the request and the reward.

Dr. Cousin explained that the process of appeals for capital projects has three phases:

1. Award from the State School Construction Program.
2. Appeal to the IAC if funding falls short of request.
3. Appeal to the Board of Public Works. The tentative date for the appeal is January 30, 2008.

Action: Mrs. Giles moved approval of the Restricted Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. French and approved by the members of the Board (7/0*).

FY 09 State Capital Budget/BPW Appeal – Approved by the Board.

Annual Reports – Grants

Presenter: Mrs. Elizabeth Mahler, Coordinator, Strategic Planning and Program Enhancement.

Mrs. Mahler presented the Annual Grants Report to the Board. She reported that the school system received nearly \$3 million in grant funding in 2007. The grants services function of the Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation Office continues to focus attention on three primary areas: program enhancement, system innovation, and capacity building. Examples of program enhancement grants are the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Planning and Implementation Grants awarded by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Grants support system innovation by providing opportunities to develop and pilot new ideas. Examples of innovative grants include the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant programs such as BRIDGES over Cradlerock and BRIDGES over Columbia (academic enrichment and family education programs targeted at underachieving students and their families). Over the last five years, HCPSS has received five MSDE 21st Century Community Learning Center grants that now operate in 14 schools.

Strategic Planning and Program Enhancement staff members help build capacity in schools and program areas when teachers and staff apply for smaller grants through corporate or community-based organizations and foundations. Examples include the Horizon Foundation's Strategic Initiative Program (SIP) grants that fund projects intended to stimulate positive changes in major health and wellness issues.

Discussion:

Dr. Siddiqui asked how a grant gets started and if a grant is written based on a need or based on available grants. Mrs. Mahler responded that a grant can work either way. A grant may already exist for a current need and/or research is done to help others request grant funds for a specific need. Grants are usually systemwide.

Mr. Cohen asked what percentage of grants written are actually received and if students are given the opportunity to participate in the

writing of a grant. Mrs. Mahler reported that approximately 80 percent of grants are actually received, and students have assisted in the writing of a grant that was offered by the Horizon Foundation.

Mrs. Mikulis inquired about the professional development workshops that are offered. Mrs. Mahler reported that the workshops are offered once a year and consist of two hours a week for five weeks. Participants include teachers, PTA members, and people from the community.

Mrs. Giles asked if the competition for grants affects the consistency level of receiving grants. Mrs. Mahler stated that competition is not an issue, but meeting grant criteria is becoming a problem.

Mrs. Gordon inquired about the Judy Center. Mrs. Mahler stated that the Judy Center is a state-funded grant that has continued to receive funding on a yearly basis. MSDE has not given any indication that money will cease for the Judy Center.

Mrs. French asked about the sustainability of grants. Mrs. Erickson explained the internal process that a grant request must go through before being submitted.

Mr. Aquino inquired about the programs that would and would not continue if grants ended. Dr. Cousin responded that the only grants applied for are grants that meet the needs of students and staff, and the grants received supplement ways of providing programs and needs of the school system. Mrs. Erickson added that a large portion of the grant money HCPSS has already received has been from Federal Entitlement Grants. These grants come with restrictions, and it is recognized that some programs could not be offered without grant funds.

Bridge to Excellence: Annual Goal 1 Progress Report

Presenters: Mrs. Terry Alban, Executive Director, Strategic Planning, Assessment and Program Evaluation; and Mr. Donyall Dickey, Principal, Murray Mill MS.

Dr. Alban presented a comprehensive summary of performance on the school system's Goal 1 standards. She noted that HCPSS made significant improvement and achieved many of the rigorous standards. While the results indicate that there is much to celebrate this year,

there were still student groups and schools that did not achieve the 2007 target, which indicates that much work is yet to be done.

Dr. Alban noted that standards would need to be updated to align with changes in the accountability system, which includes new Annual Measurable Objectives as well as any changes resulting from the reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*.

Mr. Donyall Dickey, Principal of Murray Hill MS, shared interventions that have been successful in improving academic performance and student behavior at his school. In particular, he focused on a pretest, posttest model used to reinforce key reading and mathematics concepts that are assessed through the Maryland School Assessments (MSA).

Discussion:

Board members asked questions concerning the pretest, posttest model being used. Mr. Dickey explained that the tests are prepared tests. The drills that teachers use in the first five to seven minutes of each class are their own creative drills.

Mrs. Mikulis asked why middle school math tests are not posting high results. Dr. Alban stated that similar results seem to be the trend statewide on the MSA. Mr. Dickey added that students who miss their prerequisite skills early on may have difficulty catching up to their peers. The action plan that is being used addresses prerequisite skills that were missed or not understood by students.

Mrs. Mikulis asked how students who have taken the HSA in seventh and eighth grades are tracked. Dr. Alban stated that in the Goal 1 report, the middle school section shows the students who have taken the HSA while attending middle school. Ninety-eight to ninety-nine percent of middle school students are passing the HSA. In the high school section of the Goal 1 report, only students who take the test while in high school are included. It does not include students who have taken the test while in middle school.

Mrs. Mikulis asked Dr. Alban about the norm-referenced portion of the MSA that is being eliminated by MSDE, as stated in the Goal 1 report. Dr. Alban explained that the norm-referenced portion contains only selected response items and parallels the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) that is given across the nation. The drawback to losing the norm-referenced portion is that it is a score many parents understand,

more so than they understand the scale score. The test will be slightly shorter, and the writing portion will be spread over two days. This will begin in the spring of 2008.

In response to Mrs. Mikulis, Dr. Alban stated that the 80-percent SAT participation rate is a Howard County standard. Mr. Glascock stated that 80 percent is a goal that Howard County felt it could stretch towards so more students would be encouraged not only to participate in the SATs, but also to score higher. At the same time, HCPSS has instituted administration of the PSAT to students in 10th and 11th grade as a precursor to taking the SAT. Students can use this as a guide in helping them determine areas of strength and weakness. Dr. Alban added that although a student may enroll in more than one GT class, he or she is only counted once in the Goal 1 report chart.

Mr. Aquino asked about the idea of the combined score option. Dr. Alban reported that enrollment for the Class of 2009 changes on a daily basis. As of December 18, 2007, the Class of 2009 consisted of 3,781 students. Of those, 2,940 students have passed all four exams required for graduation, and 211 of those students have met the combined score option of 1,602. Currently, 3,151 students met their graduation requirement before entering the second semester of their junior year.

Board members were impressed with the data Dr. Alban and Mr. Dickey presented and thanked them and the Murray Hill MS staff for their continuous hard work.

Update on RFP for Student Information System

Presenter: Mr. Jose Stevenson, Director of Information Technology.

Mr. Stevenson reported that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new Student Information Management System (SIMS) drew responses from seven vendors offering full packages and three vendors offering individual modules. In a SIMS status report to the Board, Mr. Stevenson indicated that the SIMS Committee would meet in January to develop a questionnaire for checking vendor references and determine criteria for evaluating vendor presentations.

Plans are for two-day vendor presentations to take place during February and to have recommendations formulated in March. A staggered rollout will begin in elementary schools during the 2008/2009 school year.

A new centralized system must address as many as 722 requirements and provide appropriate access to teachers, students, parents, and administrators within a secure environment. It is critical that the system can also differentiate functions for elementary and secondary schools and include scalable components to accommodate growth.

Discussion:

Mr. Stevenson gave a brief comparison of the Student Information System that Baltimore County and Montgomery County are currently using. Mrs. French pointed out that MSDE would like to set up a Local Education Agency (LEA) identification number that would follow and track each student within the state of Maryland. Mr. Stevenson said that the implementation of the LEA identification number system should take place in the near future.

Ms. Gordon asked about the advantages of using an existing program rather than creating a new one from scratch. Mr. Stevenson explained that using an existing system will take far less time to implement because the pieces are already developed and it would just be a matter of customizing the system to meet the needs required. Creating a system from scratch may take years and could be very costly.

Mrs. Mikulis shared a survey that was conducted by the National Center of Educational Accountability, which identified ten essential elements that are critical to launch a workable data system. Maryland received the worst rating possible, with only identifying one to three of the essential critical elements.

Mr. Aquino inquired about the proposals received from vendors. Mr. Stevenson stated that most of the proposals received are worthy and meet many HCPSS requirements.

Mr. Aquino asked for clarification regarding the staggered rollout that will begin in elementary schools. Mr. Stevenson stated that testing will start in a few sample elementary schools. Once it is proven that the system is working, schools will be added until all are under the same system, which could take at least three years to complete.

At the Board's request, Mr. Stevenson's presentation will be posted for the public on BoardDocs (Meeting of December 20, 2007, Information Item – Update on RFP for Student Information System).

Quarterly Agenda: January – March 2008

The Board reviewed and made revisions to the Quarterly Agenda.

Action: Mrs. Mikulis moved approval of the Quarterly Agenda, as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gavelek and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Scheduling

The Board scheduled upcoming meetings and events.

Adjournment

Action: Mrs. Giles moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mikulis and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

*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.