

# **Summary of the Board of Education Meeting**

## **Thursday, November 8, 2007**

### **Action Items**

- Approved the restricted consent agenda including bids and contracts, staff personnel, the promotion of Dale Castro from Guidance Counselor at River Hill to Assistant Principal at Atholton High School, and minutes of closed meetings.
- Approved a consent agenda including donations and minutes of regular board meetings, and received school construction and operating budget reports.
- Approved a proclamation in honor of Veterans Day and honored veterans currently employed by the HCPSS.

### **Board reviews 2008-2009 calendar proposal**

Director of Public Relations Patti Caplan presented the proposed instructional calendar for the 2008-2009 school year. Recommendations from the Calendar Committee include a start date of August 19 for teachers and August 25 for students. Winter Break is proposed for December 24 through January 2. Spring Break is proposed for April 6 through April 13. The last day of school for 2009 is slated for June 15.

The proposed calendar will be posted on the school system website for public review. The Board will hold a public hearing on the calendar on January 10 and take action on January 24, 2008.

### **Board Receives Communication and Public Engagement Plan**

Director of Staff Relations Sue Mascaro reported on the development of a strategic Communication and Public Engagement Plan for the school system. Last year, the Chief of Staff and the Deputy Superintendent convened a study group to review the system's current communication and public engagement practices.

That Communication and Public Engagement Study Group identified "best practices" among exemplary programs in Maryland, identified gaps in current practices and made recommendations. The work of the group along with information gathered through a formal communication audit conducted by National School Public Relations Association was used to develop a two-phase strategic plan.

The plan is designed to increase the capacity of the school system to positively and proactively communicate with, market to, and engage its various internal and external stakeholder groups. The plan's high leverage strategies include identification of marketing needs and tools, expansion and strengthening of system communication vehicles, targeted training for employees, and ongoing assessment and evaluation of all communications programs and activities.

### **Policies on nepotism, programs for pregnant teens up for review**

The Board received reports on revisions to two policies. Minor changes are recommended for Policy 7020, Nepotism, including refocusing the policy statement

and adding a purpose statement to address issues beyond initial hiring and to establish a context of conflict of interest/ethical behavior. Revisions reflect current practice by codifying the requirement that provisions of the policy be considered when making assignments, transfers, and promotions. In addition, the standard related to marriage has been broadened to include relationships and living arrangements, consistent with the definition of “immediate family member.”

The review of Policy 9100, Educational Program for Pregnant Students, was assigned to the Policy Advisory Committee, which was assisted by Craig Cumming and other appropriate staff. There was discussion as to whether a policy highlighting the requirement to provide educational services for this particular population is still needed. The committee determined that the need to communicate this requirement does still exist, particularly with regard to middle school populations.

The committee further recommended reflecting current practice regarding educational services actually offered by the school system and noting the system’s commitment to support parenting as well as pregnant students through changes in the policy title, the policy statement, and a standard. The revised policy also highlights the requirement to divulge confidences regarding pregnancy.

The Board will hold public hearings on both policies on December 13 and take action on January 10. Hearings on Policy 9220, Corporal Punishment, and 9200, Discipline, and Policy 9040, High School Grievance Committee, drew no public testimony.

**In other action...**

At Public Forum, Steve Lucchesi and Cindy Ardinger addressed the Board with their concerns about the planning process for the Mt. Hebron High School renovation and recommended that the Board require the committee to comply with Policy 6020.

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin remarked on his attendance at the Technology Visioning Event and on the fiscal challenges the school system faces in the FY09 budget development. He congratulated Marriotts Ridge High School Principal Patrick Saunderson as this year’s recipient of the Washington Post’s Distinguished Educational Leadership Award and students Philip Sandborn of Wilde Lake High School and Sarah Kamel of Centennial High School, who are semifinalists in the Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology.

Assistant Superintendent Bob Glascock and Executive Director of Strategic Planning, Assessment and Program Evaluation Terry Alban reported on recent changes to requirements related to the High School Assessments.

Mary Jane Grauso, President of the PTA Council, shared concerns related to the Mt. Hebron High School renovation planning committee process and asked for criteria for procurement of supplies and services.

The Board Chairman introduced Rose Dennison, the newly hired Ombudsman for the school system.

**The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 29, 2007.**