

Summary of the Board of Education Meeting

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Action Items

- Elected Frank Aquino and Ellen Flynn Giles as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board, respectively, for the coming year.
- Approved the regular consent agenda including donations, membership of the FY09 Operating Budget Review Committee, and minutes of regular board meetings and donations; and received status reports on the operating budget and school construction funds.
- Approved the restricted agenda including bids and contracts, staff personnel and minutes of closed meetings.
- Approved voting procedures for the student member of the Board of Education.
- Accepted the FY2007 Audit and Management Letter.
- Accepted the Superintendent's Certification of reporting requirements.
- Approved a motion to forego any elementary, middle or high school redistricting and continuing the Greenbridge exception until the comprehensive high school attendance area adjustments for 2010.
- Voted down a motion to provide bus transportation to students attending Glenelg High from the Greenbridge area.
- Approved the incorporation of the Board's position on corporal punishment into the discipline policy and related edits to Policies 1030 and 9020.
- Rescinded Policy 9220, Corporal Punishment.
- Rescinded Policy 9040, High School Grievance Committee, and removed references to the policy in Policy 9020.

Board Elects to Continue Greenbridge Exception

The Board agreed to forego any redistricting for the 2008-2009 school year and to continue the current exception for the Greenbridge area. After hearing from Joel Gallihue, Manager of School Planning, that the Board is not bound by commitments made in the past, the Board determined that high school students residing in the Greenbridge area have the option to attend Glenelg or River Hill high schools until a change is made, probably in 2010. A motion to provide transportation to students who elect to attend Glenelg was defeated.

Unqualified Audit Report Issued

Beverly Davis reported that the school system received an unqualified opinion from Clifton Gunderson, LLP, who performed the external audit of the financial statements of the Board of Education of Howard County for the year ending June 30, 2007. Davis reported that the auditor noted two deficiencies in school bus contacts and school construction imbursements. Davis indicated that she would provide the Board with a status report on those items in April.

Board Considers Revisions to Three Policies

The Board heard reports on proposed revisions to policies on discrimination, sexual harassment and confidentiality of personnel records. Changes to Policy 1010,

Discrimination, include a revised policy statement, removal of references to hate/bias, a revised definition of discrimination and the inclusion of a standard regarding notification. The policy outlines how students, employees and third parties may file complaints and clarifies which complaints must be reported to the Equity Assurance Coordinator. School counselors have been added to the list of those to whom students may file complaints.

Revisions to Policy 1020, Sexual Harassment, are similar and include a rewrite of notification procedures to ensure consistency with similar policies. The proposed changes emphasize the need for consideration of Policy 1030, Child Abuse and Neglect, in the review of reported incidents. The policy clarifies the process through which students, employees and third parties may file complaints and identifies which complaints are to be handled by school administrators and which must be referred to the Equity Assurance Coordinator.

Revisions to Policy 7010, Confidentiality of Personnel Records, focus the policy on personnel files and remove an overly broad statement regarding employee information. The revised policy also includes an updated definition of school officials and references an employee's right to review files and receive copies as stated in the negotiated agreements. The policy clarifies that records of grievances and 4-205 appeals will not be kept in personnel files and adds a standard regarding confidentiality of personnel files and records.

Public hearings on all three policies are scheduled for January 10, with action expected on February 7.

Public Hearing on Policy 9100, Educational Programs for Pregnant Students

Thirteen persons presented testimony at a hearing on proposed changes to Policy 9100, Educational Programs for Pregnant Students. Testimony was split between those supporting the policy's provision that parents be informed of their child's pregnancy and those who felt that mandatory notification of parents would discourage teens from seeking counsel or help.

Dr. Maura Rossman; Dr. Tina Cheng; Laura Smit, testifying for her daughter Julia Ramirez; Evelyn Simpkins; Deborah Chilcoat; Deborah Matherly; and Rosemary Mortimer spoke against the parental notification provision. Councilwoman Mary Kay Sigaty suggested that mandatory notification with no discretion might put students at greater risk but that when there is a risk to the student, confidentiality could be waved. She noted that "risk" is not defined in the policy.

Carolyn Hunt; Stephanie Foster; Ellicia Chau; Chris Wertman, speaking as Chairman of the Community Advisory Committee; and Pastor David Piligian, presenting testimony on behalf of Rev. George Lippitt, supported the need for parental notification.

The Board is expected to take action on Policy 9100 on January 10. Public hearings on revisions to Policy 7020, Nepotism, and next year's proposed school calendar drew no public comment.

In Other Action...

In his report to the Board, Superintendent Sydney Cousin commended Michelle Leader,

Assistant Principal at Phelps Luck Elementary School, for her selection by the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals as the 2008 Assistant Principal of the Year. He also congratulated Buyer Cece Clements for earning designation as a Certified Professional Public Buyer and Glenwood Middle School science teacher Amanda Richardson for her selection as an Amgen-National Science Teacher Association Associate Fellow.

Dr. Cousin also reported that the school system's appeal to the Interagency Committee yielded an additional \$2 million in state dollars for the FY09 capital budget, for a total of \$14 million.

In reviewing the tentative Quarterly Agenda for January through March 2008, the Board scheduled a second public hearing on the 2008-09 proposed school calendar for January 10, 2008 and moved the approval of the calendar to February 14. The Television Services Task Force Report was rescheduled for March 13.

Mary Jane Grauso, President of the PTA Council of Howard County, thanked Young-Chan Han for her service to the international community of Howard County and wished her well in her new position with the Maryland State Department of Education. She also asked the Board about construction contracts that were approved as part of the consent agenda and asked for the Board's response as to how members of the public would know about these contracts.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 20, 2007.