

## **A Summary of the Board of Education Meeting Thursday, September 4, 2008**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Approved a consent agenda including minutes of regular Board of Education and new Italian textbooks for use at Wilde Lake High.
- Approved a restricted consent agenda including staff personnel, bids and contracts, donations and the minutes of Board of Education closed meetings and received the School Construction Monthly Report.
- Approved administrative promotions.
- Approved the appointment of Sandra Keaton, Instructional Facilitator, Language Arts.
- Approved a proclamation designating September 15-October 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month in the HCPSS.
- Approved a proclamation honoring Harriet Tubman Day.

### **Report highlights what it takes to prepare for the first day of school**

The Chief of Staff, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer reported on the range and volume of work that occurs over the summer months in preparation for the opening of school. The reports highlighted everything from teacher hiring to school construction projects. Each area chief provided data and little-known facts about how central services staff "spend their 'summer vacations'."

### **Superintendent asks for \$125M in funding for modernization projects**

Superintendent Sydney Cousin presented his recommended fiscal year 2010 Capital Budget and fiscal year 2011-2015 Capital Improvement Program. In introducing the \$125M request for next year, he noted that a significant share of the increase is due to inflation as represented by the increase in state square foot costs. Major projects include the Mt. Hebron High School renovation, a new maintenance/warehouse facility, and a renovation/addition to the old Cedar Lane School facility. Also included in the FY10 request are an addition to Bellows Spring Elementary, a renovation/addition at Northfield Elementary and dance studios at Hammond and Centennial high schools.

The request for FY10 totals \$125,304,000. The five-year Capital Improvement Program Request totals \$561,904,000. The Board will hold a public hearing on the budget request on Thursday, September 18 at 7:30 pm. A public work session and action are scheduled for Thursday, October 2 at 7:30 pm.

### **Board shares ideas for the 2009-2010 calendar**

Director of Public Relations Patti Caplan presented the Charter for the establishment of the Instructional Calendar Committee, which will propose a calendar for the 2009-2010 school year. In preparation for the committee's work, Board members discussed items they would like the committee to consider.

Among those items are the length of spring and winter breaks, the effectiveness of using Take Your Child to Work Day as a professional development day, and the importance of "front-loading" instruction before the administration of the Maryland State Assessments. The proposed calendar will be presented to the Board on November 6. The public hearing will be held on December 11, with Board action on January 8, 2009.

#### **Additional policies up for review**

The Board received Committee Charters forming committees to review and revise Policy 4060, Third Party Billing; Policy 7100, Family and Medical Leave; and Policy 7130, Substitute Teachers. The Board also received a report on recommended changes to Policy 6030, Procurement of Architectural and Engineering Services and Policy 6040, Procurement of Construction Management Services Report.

The recommended policy combines the two former policies into one, Policy 6030, Procurement of Architectural/Engineering and Construction Management Services. Language has been added that allows the Director of School Construction to negotiate fees, removes specific directions regarding fee negotiations with firms and removes dollar limits for capital improvement projects. A public hearing on the proposed policy is scheduled for October 2, with action set for November 6, 2008.

#### **Work on local assessments supports continuous improvement**

The Board moved the Information Item on the Local Assessment Program to the agenda for discussion. Chief Operating Officer Terry Alban provided a brief update on the review process that has taken place over the past two years.

In 2006-2007, feedback from teachers during the Candid Conversations included many concerns about aspects of the Local Assessment Program. At the middle school principals' retreat in January 2007, issues about the local assessment program and suggestions were shared. The Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation (SAPE) held focus groups with randomly selected teachers from each level and with curriculum coordinators in February and March 2007 to gather more specific feedback about the Local Assessment Program.

In the spring of 2007, the School Support Team (SST) met to discuss the feedback and develop an action plan. That action plan included establishing a high school work group to examine issues specific to the high school local assessment program and to make recommendations for the 2008- 2009 school year.

The HCPSS Local Assessment Program includes over 100 assessments developed by Curriculum Coordinators and teachers. These assessments are given regularly in Grades 3-8 and for identified high school courses. The results

of these assessments are aggregated centrally and the data are provided to schools. The purposes of the Local Assessment Program are:

- To provide teachers and administrators with an objective measure of student performance on HCPSS curricular standards in order to provide consistency across the county (summative).
- To provide information to teachers to guide instructional decisions (formative).
- To provide students and teachers with a potential indicator of performance on state mandated assessments (formative).

The Local Assessment Program is continuously refined to support changes in the state standards and feedback from teachers.

In other action...

At Public Forum, Nikia Humphrey addressed the Board on the educational services available to schools through the Army National Guard. Howard Lyles, representing the Harriet Tubman Foundation, extended an invitation to the Board to attend the Harriet Tubman Day Celebration sponsored by the Foundation and thanked the Superintendent for requesting funds for a new maintenance facility so that the Harriet Tubman Building can be converted for other use.

Board member Janet Siddiqui reported on a visit to Centennial Lane ES to witness the healthy snacks pilot. Board member Patricia Gordon reported on the Board of Education's "What Counts" Forum on Nov. 11 at 7:00 pm at the Homewood Center that will give community members an opportunity to learn about the Board's Operating Budget and discuss budget priorities.

John Hannay, President of PTA Council of Howard County, reported on the Council's first meeting of the year and plans for the coming year.

The Board reviewed its tentative quarterly agenda for October through December 2008.

**The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 4:00 pm on Thursday, September 18, 2008.**