

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

October 8, 2008

The members of the Board of Education of Howard County held a retreat on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. at The Gathering Place, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. The meeting was open to the public. The following were present:

Frank J. Aquino, Chairman  
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman  
Lawrence H. Cohen  
Sandra H. French  
Patricia Gordon  
Diane B. Mikulis  
Janet Siddiqui, M.D. (arrived at approximately 2pm)  
Adejire Bademosi  
Kitty Blumsack, Facilitator, Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)  
Board Office Staff: Barbara Bowers, John Connors, Arlene Conway, Rose Dennison, Kathy Hanks, and Florence Jackson  
School Staff: Dr. Sydney Cousin, Superintendent; Ms. Sandra Erickson, Deputy Superintendent; Ms. Mamie Perkins, Chief of Staff; Dr. Terry Alban, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Raymond Brown, Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Linda Wise, Chief Academic Officer; and Mr. Mark Blom, General Counsel

Mr. Aquino called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and thanked everyone, including Staff for their attendance. He then advised that the purpose of the retreat was to discuss Board communications and follow-up on the action items from the August 22<sup>nd</sup> Retreat. Mr. Aquino then introduced Ms. Blumsack from MABE.

Ms. Blumsack welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. The Board then discussed the status of items addressed at the last session.

Board Committees: Ms. Blumsack extended her congratulations to the Board for its work in finalizing the establishment of Board Committees.

Board Staff Roles and Responsibilities: Board members will continue to finalize a consistent format for Board staff direct reports. The plan is to have it done by the end of the year.

What Counts: “Save-the-date” cards were sent out in September, and this week letters will be sent out to community, etc. Facilitators are lined up for the evening. Ms. Gordon stated St. Mary’s had 200 people attend and Ms. Gordon wants more than that. She also feels we are in competition nationally.

Board Handbook: Ms. Mikulis and Ms. Jackson have been meeting and considered combining the handbook and orientation together, but it was decided they needed to be separate. After discussing various means of organizing the information, they are considering using snapshots similar to the Administrators Handbook. The goal is to

make the handbook easier to use and to update, but the history of the document would be kept. Ms. Giles advised that the group is on track and that Patricia Gordon, Ellen Flynn Giles, Mamie Perkins, Diane Mikulis, and Florence Jackson will need to meet for a couple of hours to complete the task. The goal for completion is still December 1, 2008.

Communication Protocol: Ms. Blumsack recommended that this be reviewed to make sure everyone is familiar with it. She also stated that it would be good to meet at another time to review as a group and make sure all procedures are being followed. It was also suggested that the Board should review communication protocol annually.

Exploration of New Ways to Communicate:

Blogs – Ms. Bademosi shared that HCASC is creating a website and can post blogs. It will include separate sections for each school, minutes, and all types of information. They are using Joomla to create this website. Each year they will need to have a new web writer.

Eschoolnewsletter – Ms. Hanks spoke with Public Information and it was recommended that we not use Eschoolnewsletter as it would look too political. A better avenue would be to use *Home from School*. The Board staff would create the document and send it to Public Information to include in the *Home from School* newsletter where the Board would have its own section. Also, we could post “Board Highlights” on the web quarterly.

Podcasts – Ms. Giles initiated conversation with the HCPSS TV station. We have also looked into BoardDocs and the video access. We have a couple of options that we can look at, and there are a number of options that we can use in BoardDocs that we are not presently accessing. This will relieve the webmaster, and it puts all Board documents in one place, which would also be cost effective.

Actions: Will continue to investigate Podcasts, BoardDocs & *Home from School*.

Dr. Cousin asked if the Coffee and Conversation events are an effective way of communication. Ms. Mikulis and Mr. Cohen were to explore this. There was discussion on how the Board could be where the constituents are. Suggestions were Lakefront in the summertime, mall, libraries, etc. Another possibility is creating a “Board Traveling Show” to present at PTSA meetings. It was also discussed that the Board Clusters’ list needs to be communicated to each school’s PTSA.

Ms. Blumsack presented the D.I.S.C. exercise to the group. The results and how they would assist the Board and staff in being an even better team, were then discussed

Mrs. Hanks distributed possible dates to Board members to schedule an evidentiary hearing. No meeting date was decided upon.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.