

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY

January 22, 2009

The Board of Education of Howard County held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 22, 2009, 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, Esq., Chairman
Ellen Flynn Giles, Vice Chairman
Lawrence H. Cohen
Allen Dyer, Esq.
Sandra H. French
Patricia S. Gordon (arrived at 5:50 p.m.)
Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Adejire Bademosi, Student Member

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

Chairman Frank Aquino called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m., and Ms. Johanna Rojas, Reservoir HS Student Government Association (SGA) President, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Approval of Agenda

It was noted that Item 7.A. Renovation Guidelines was changed from an action item to a report.

Action: Mrs. Giles moved acceptance of the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Dr. Siddiqui and approved by the members of the Board (6/0).

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cousin shared that teachers and other staff did a superior job in ensuring that the Presidential Inauguration on January 20, 2009, was an engaging educational experience for students.

Dr. Cousin congratulated Centennial HS seniors Peter Kamel and Henry Zheng for being named semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search. Congratulations were also extended to the Atholton HS Future Educators Association for winning the 2009 Pearson Foundation Award for the National Video of the Year.

In addition, Dr. Cousin announced that Melissa Shindel, Assistant Principal at Patuxent Valley MS, has been selected as one of three finalists for National Assistant Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The winner will be announced at the NASSP conference next month.

Student Representative's Report

Ms. Johanna Rojas, Reservoir HS SGA Vice President, reported on recent school activities and provided information about advisory meetings, school clubs, and character-building, civility, and leadership-building activities.

Board Members' Reports

Mrs. Giles reported on the recent Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Commission Celebration at which a number of Howard County middle and high school students were recognized and received monetary awards for their written essays. A poster contest was also held for elementary students.

Mrs. French reported on activities related to the Howard County Chinese School New Year Celebration and noted that this event is beneficial in providing a better understanding of the Howard County community and its constituents.

Ms. Bademosi encouraged all Grade 6-12 students who are interested in developing leadership opportunities to attend the next HCASC (Howard County Association of Student Councils) meeting on January 28, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in Room B-37 of the Applications and Research Lab (ARL) building.

Appointment – NAACP 2008 Report Card

This report was postponed to a future date.

Consent Agenda (Restricted*)

Bids and Contracts and Donations

Action: Mrs. Giles moved approval of the Restricted Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cohen and approved by the members of the Board (6/0*).

Bids and Contracts – Approved by the Board.

P-1	PRIMARY INTERFACE (PRI) TELEPHONE SERVICES Verizon	\$59,975.28/year
P-2	DIGITAL TRANSMISSION SERVICES Cavalier Telephone LLC	\$103,200/year
P-3	CENTREX TELEPHONE SERVICES Verizon	\$384,000/year
P-4	CELLULAR VOICE TELEPHONE SERVICES AT & T Sprint Verizon TOTAL	\$130,944/year
P-5	CELLULAR DATA TELEPHONE SERVICES AT & T Sprint Verizon TOTAL	\$5,040/year
P-6	WEB HOSTING SERVICES Verio	\$3,359.40/year

Donations – Approved by the Board.

The following schools have received donations:

St. John's ES: Verizon Foundation, in the amount of \$750, designated for the purchase of student incentives to support the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports System (PBIS).

Atholton HS: Music Boosters, in the amount of \$1,200, designated to assist with culinary expenses for the POP concert.

Hermina Law Group, in the amount of \$500, designated to assist with the cost of a bus for the boys' basketball team to attend the Holiday Tournament in West Virginia.

Centennial HS: Boosters, in the amount of \$3,000, designated for the purchase of a football sled.

Consent Agenda

Minutes of January 6, 2009 (Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed FY 2010 Operating Budget Request)

Action: Dr. Siddiqui moved approval of the Regular Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bademosi and approved by the members of the Board (7/0).

Bridge to Excellence: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Initiative (STEM)

Presenters: Mr. John Quinn, STEM Project Director; Ms. Linda Wise, Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Clarissa Evans, Executive Director of Curricular Programs; Mr. Bill Barnes, Coordinator; Ms. Susan Pope, Teacher; Ms. Connie Finney, Johns Hopkins APL; Ms. Roberta Rosnik, Teacher; Ms. Carol Fritts, Coordinator; Ms. Kay Sammons, Coordinator; Ms. Karen Learmouth, Coordinator; Mr. Dean Sheridan, Teacher; Mr. Thomas Payne, Coordinator; and Mr. Richard Weisenhoff, Coordinator.

Dr. Evans introduced a Bridge to Excellence (BTE) Report on recent developments related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and the activities launched in connection with a \$258,000 grant from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). In the report that followed, Mr. John Quinn, Secondary Science Coordinator, and other staff presented background information

and status reports on the system's efforts to address the critical workforce needs in STEM-related professions.

The comprehensive response is spelled out in a STEM Strategic Plan, which was developed with extensive input from the business community, in particular the STEM Business and Education Coalition (STEM BEC), curriculum staff in the STEM areas, and leaders across the system. The STEM Strategic Plan is organized around the following seven goals:

- Goal 1: Engage more students, particularly at the elementary level, in STEM-related academics and enrichment programs, both in class and through extended day/week/year programs.
- Goal 2: Expand talent-spotting and talent-development practices, particularly preK-8, to nurture and guide more students into STEM experiences and coursework.
- Goal 3: Manage the STEM Resource Center (SRC) as both a physical and a virtual entity dedicated to the systemwide advancement of STEM-related education.
- Goal 4: Recruit, retain, and provide job-appropriate professional development for all HCPSS administrators, teachers, counselors, and long-term volunteers who impact student enrollment and success in STEM education.
- Goal 5: Create strategic, sustainable relationships with partner organizations and volunteers that increase the impact of private sector employers, government agencies, higher education, and professional and community organizations on STEM education.
- Goal 6: Increase knowledge and support of STEM careers, programs, and experiences among all stakeholders: students, parents, HCPSS faculty and staff, Board of Education, employment community, higher education, government agencies, professional and community organizations, and residents.
- Goal 7: Secure human, financial, capital, and other resources that will facilitate long-term sustainability and expansion of STEM-related academic, career, and enrichment experiences.

Next steps call for the recommendations made in the STEM Strategic Plan to be infused into the HCPSS Bridge to Excellence (BTE) Master Plan for the 2009/2010 school year. These recommendations will become part of a more comprehensive BTE high-leverage strategy

that focuses on career and academic planning. In addition, committees established by STEM BEC will begin working towards the goals and activities contained in the plan.

Discussion:

Mrs. French spoke about social communication and confidentiality issues and noted the importance of addressing these issues as part of career counseling for students.

Mr. Cohen praised students for their presentation and spoke about the need for gaining support from local and federal lawmakers in realizing the importance of science education.

Ms. Bademosi asked about tracking students who participate in STEM summer programs. Mr. Quinn stated that tracking is in the early stages, and student involvement in various programs is being tracked to determine if students stay involved. Staff is working with the Student Assessment and Program Evaluation (SAPE) office to develop more sophisticated ways of measuring the effectiveness of these programs.

Regarding initiatives to get more minorities and females involved in STEM, outreach programs are being designed to encourage their involvement.

Dr. Cousin expressed appreciation to HCPSS business partners for volunteering their time and energy to serve as STEM BEC members and pointed out that the program has advanced due to their efforts. He also noted the importance of exposing students at a young age and stated that the business community has expressed a need for technicians to maintain equipment as well as people to design and build new systems. There are job opportunities for students who do not attend college as well as for those who do. Dr. Cousin expressed the need to encourage all students that this is an option for careers and to have exploratory opportunities for students at all grade levels.

Mrs. French asked about talent spotting, and Mr. Quinn explained that efforts are being made to keep a student portfolio that is passed on at each level and contains information on a student's interests and aptitudes in STEM-related areas. At the high school level, this information can be used to make decisions about choosing elective pathways and particular programs. Dr. Evans explained that part of the plan also involves parent outreach so that they are aware of the

pathways that exist within the school system. Staff is looking at the types of materials that need to be developed to share with students and parents so they have a better understanding of the relationship between what a student accomplishes in school and opportunities that will be available to them upon graduation.

Mr. Aquino pointed out that the intention is to develop programs in all HCPSS schools, and Mr. Quinn noted that many teachers are volunteering their time to provide programs that are not funded by the STEM grant.

Renovation Guidelines

Presenter: Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director, Facilities Planning and Management.

Mr. Roey presented an overview of the proposed Guidelines for Renovation and Modernization of Existing Buildings that will be used by school system staff and architectural/engineering firms hired to work on HCPSS renovations. Mr. Roey explained that the standards in the manual represent minimum criteria and are not mandatory; however, every attempt will be made to meet the standards on each project. A waiver will be required for any deviation from the standards.

Discussion:

Mrs. Erickson emphasized that the guidelines are designed with flexibility to address issues that may come up after the capital budget is approved. It was also noted that each renovation project will require input from the Chief Academic Officer to ensure that the instructional program needs can be met within proposed designs.

Highlights:

- Any eliminations of capacity must come back to the Board for a waiver.
- No cafeterias will be reduced in size.
- Generally, existing elementary schools will not be brought up to the building capacity of 788.
- It is not the intent of a renovation project to bring the building up to the most current educational specifications as used for the design of a new school.
- Design implications preclude imposing LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification requirements on projects that are executed solely over the summer break, but renovations

that take place over the academic year could be considered for LEED certification.

- Carpeting was taken out of the recent educational specifications and replaced with vinyl tile, which is better for indoor air quality, health, and safety. Mats are used for children to sit on when needed at the elementary level.
- Replacement of asbestos floor tile is performed over the summer months and follows very detailed EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) requirements.

Mr. Aquino asked that additional comments, questions, or suggestions be submitted to Mr. Roey prior to the Board taking action on the guidelines on February 26, 2009.

High School Capacity

Presenter: Mr. Joel Gallihue, Manager, School Planning, and Mr. Ken Roey, Executive Director, Facilities Planning and Management

Mr. Gallihue recommended that the school system exchange its current formula for determining high school capacities for the existing state formula. He explained that the current high school capacity formula approved by the Board represents a uniform target based on a minimum number of 63 teaching stations, a 23.5:1 class size ratio, and the assumption that 90 percent of the space can be utilized effectively.

Mr. Gallihue cited three reasons for recommending the change. First, all high school buildings have more than 63 teaching stations, excluding classrooms dedicated to special education usage. Additionally, the current staffing ratio at the high school level is 27:1 and at some point in the future may be lowered to 25:1. Finally, an assumption that 90 percent of the space can be utilized effectively may be too ambitious given variations in hallway size, cafeteria size, and other support spaces within different buildings.

The state formula as defined in COMAR 23.03.02.04 provides a consistent and more reflective guideline. Using the state formula, high school capacity would be determined by taking the staffing ratio (25) times the number of teaching stations times the percent utilization (85%). This increases the overall system capacity by approximately 2,000 seats and could delay redistricting until 2015. Mr. Gallihue noted that the educational program would not be compromised but

indicated that increasing capacities could put a strain on core facilities and result in more competition for extracurricular activities.

Discussion:

Mrs. Erickson noted that if the Board agrees to go in the direction of this proposal and count the actual number of teaching stations, staff would go back for accuracy and analyze each high school individually and not simply rely on the Gilbert report for this information.

Board members expressed concern with capacity calculations and how they affect core facilities and special programs. Dr. Cousin emphasized that the goal is to more accurately reflect true capacities of buildings rather than looking at a formula to make all schools equal. The proposed approach seems to be more logical and rational, although there are various issues that need additional discussion. The most important aspect is having adequate facilities to deliver the educational program. In recent years, the feasibility study, capital budget, and redistricting have all been tied together so that redistricting and building requirements are based on information that best reflects existing conditions.

The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposal on February 26, 2009.

Recess: The meeting was recessed by the Chairman at 6:38 p.m. and reconvened at 7:51 p.m.

Public Forum

There was no one present to address the Board.

Appointment – PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC)

There was no one present to address the Board.

Proposed 2009/2010 Instructional Calendar

Presenter: Ms. Patti Caplan, Director of Public Relations.

Ms. Caplan reviewed the recommendations of the Calendar Committee for the 2009/2010 Instructional Calendar.

At the request of the Board, the committee also looked at the possibility of reducing spring break, as well as the pros and cons associated with shortening the break. There were equally compelling reasons on both sides of the issue, and the Board received over 700 comments on the proposed calendar, the majority of which asked that the Board not shorten the break.

Based on the Superintendent's proposed budget for next year, the calendar reflects the recommendation that all schools and offices be closed during the 2009 winter break to save on energy costs.

Based on feedback from the original recommendations, Plan B was developed, which would keep the traditional spring break the same length as the current year. As a result, adjustments were needed concerning marking periods.

Discussion:

The following issues were also discussed:

- Various problems associated with absenteeism related to Take Your Child to Work Day and possible solutions other than the current one of holding professional development on that day.
- Concerns about AP testing possibly being scheduled at the same time a professional development day is scheduled for May 14, 2010.
- The rationale for the addition of an extra half-day at the elementary and middle school levels.
- Possibilities of scheduling professional development days before school starts and at the end of the school year.
- The inclusion of course withdrawal deadlines on the calendar.
- The rationale for moving spring break to the week following Easter.
- The appropriateness and practicality of holding an additional public hearing in response to Plan B.
- Possible ways to accommodate Passover in future instructional calendars.

Action: Mr. Cohen moved that spring break continue to be a full week in the instructional calendar. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gordon and approved by the members of the Board (7/1), with Mr. Aquino voting no.

Motion: Mrs. Gordon moved that January 21, 2010, remain a full day of instruction for middle and elementary students.

It was noted that the current arrangement for mid-term week and the end of the first semester would remain the same as the current calendar.

Action: The motion was approved by the members of the Board (7/1), with Mr. Cohen voting no.

Motion: Mrs. French moved that the Board not honor Take Your Child to Work Day.

Mrs. French amended the motion as follows:

Motion: Mrs. French moved that the Professional Development Day scheduled for April 22, 2010, be rescheduled to April 23, 2010, or another time that the Superintendent recommended.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

Action: Mrs. Giles moved acceptance of Plan B with the changes already approved by a majority of the Board regarding the end of the first semester. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bademosi and approved by the members of the Board (8/0).

Summary of Approved 2009/2010 Instructional Calendar

The Board voted down recommendations to close all schools early on the Thursday of mid-term exam week and to use half of the Professional Work Day in January for school-based professional development.

Teachers will return to work next year on August 25, 2009, and school begins for students on August 31. The Countywide Professional Development Day was returned to the Friday before Labor Day, and the School-based Professional Development/Work Day is scheduled for November 6, 2009, which is the end of the first quarter.

Winter break begins on December 24, 2009, and runs through January 1, 2010. All schools and offices will be closed during the 2009 winter break.

Spring break begins on April 2, 2009, and extends through April 9, 2009. The last day of school is set for Wednesday, June 16, 2010.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 9:02 p.m.

*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.