



Board Meeting

January 27, 2003

Terry R. Troy, *President*
Robert S. Magee, *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Ruth R. "Robin" Rich
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.
Karen L. Wolf
Mark M. Wolkow
Molly P. Harris,
Student Representative
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - President of the Board of Education of Harford County Terry R. Troy called the regular business meeting of the Board to order at 6:35 p.m. in the auditorium of Edgewood High School. Mrs. Troy asked for a quorum call which showed that all Board members were present. Board Member Karen L. Wolf moved and Past President Eugene C. Chandler seconded that the agenda be adopted as presented. The Board voted unanimously to support the motion. Mrs. Troy directed that Board Member Mark M. Wolkow lead those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Troy asked that those present join her in a moment of silence in memory of Harford County NAACP Chapter President Joseph Bond who passed away during the previous week.

RECOGNITION

Student Representative to the Board Molly P. Harris provided information about those who were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments by the Board. First to be honored were the two HCPS Educator Hall of Fame inductees for January, Anita R. Townsley and R. Bryson Curry. Mrs. Townsley spent 31 ½ years as a teacher in Harford County, 31 of those years as a Home Economics and Psychology teacher at Aberdeen High School where she introduced many initiatives including Family Life instruction, Child Development, party cookery, interior design, tailoring, creative sewing and many others. She also pioneered the bringing of boys into Home Economics so that they would be able to care for themselves as adults. She used her impeccable personal taste and love for young people to provide many

lasting skills for her students. Mr. Curry taught vocal and instrumental music for 39 years, 27 of those in Harford County and 22 at Hickory Elementary School where he used his considerable personal musical ability to inspire two generations of young students to pursue their love of music. He also introduced computer labs to the school in the 1980s and parlayed his love for photography to provide encouragement for students and staff at the school. Mr. Curry was active in the local teachers union and served as Teacher in Charge at Hickory Elementary. Both Mrs. Townsley and Mr. Curry were presented with plaques, certificates and laminated copies of the articles in Harford Schools done on their exploits by Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas and Mrs. Troy.

Also honored was Abingdon Elementary School first grade teacher Francine Plotycia who was notified in November that she had received National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification after a year-and-a-half intensive personal staff development process. Mrs. Plotycia became the eighth instructor to be certified while an employee of the Harford County Public Schools.

In addition, the Board recognized Kimberly C. "Kimmie" Meissner who won the U.S. National Novice Ladies Freestyle Figure Skating championship for 2003. Ms. Meissner, a 13-year-old eighth grader at Southampton Middle School, won over 11 other sectional qualifiers in competition held in Dallas, Texas in mid-January. She will now be a member of Team USA which will travel to Slovenia in April to take part in the international championships where she will be one of two Americans in the junior division.

The final recognition of the evening was presented to HCPS Supervisor of Science Dennis L. Kirkwood who has been named the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's 2002 Environmental Educator of the Year. Dr. Kirkwood has been a leader in the county's renowned environmental science program for 15 years, overseeing the Harford Glen Outdoor Education Program for many years and setting the tone for a HCPS outstanding record in accomplishment in environmental science including seven state Envirothon titles in 12 years and three national top five finishes. The CBF recognized Dr. Kirkwood for his personal and professional devotion to the health of the Bay and his influence on students, teachers and colleagues in furthering the cause.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pat Balducci of Bel Air told the Board she is a clinical social worker and, speaking for herself, said that ninth grade is too late to teach essential information about sexually transmitted diseases. She said she sees, too often, the crisis that young adolescents are in because of sexually experimentation, adding that middle school is the place to teach the material.

Mike Davis of Essex said it is important that the system build enough schools to accommodate all its students and that older buildings need to be refurbished.

Stephanie Genco, a member of the Fallston High School Student Government Association, said the Board should not let a "vocal minority" dissuade it from doing the right thing which

is the teaching of essential information about sex to middle schoolers. She said parents can supplement the instruction by providing values at home and can opt out their children if they don't want them to be taught Focus Area III information.

Mary Frances Tracy of Jarrettsville questioned information provided in exhibits about the teaching of "barrier methods" to middle schoolers. She said she wholeheartedly supports the teaching of abstinence but it sends a conflicting message if students are told not to have sex, but, if they do, here's how to avoid STDs.

Tina Janouris, president of the Harford County Council of PTAs, presented the Board with a letter detailing the activities of the organization to date and expressing its views on a variety of issues.

Christine Engbert of Forest Hill said she was concerned about possible inconsistencies in the proposed middle school sex education curriculum. She said there could be a stigma against students whose parents opt them out of the instruction. She added that she would prefer girls and boys be taught the sensitive material separately. Ms. Engbert urged the Board to provide instruction to parents on the sexual education material so that they can then teach their children.

Maggie Rohrbaugh said that she has worked as an HIV professional and now is a middle school teacher said it is "scary" what is going on among middle schools insofar as sexual activity outside school. She said the material will be presented in a "careful and thoughtful way" and urged "local politicians" and others who have opposed the shifting of the instruction to the middle schools to investigate the situation before reacting.

Tanya Stoney said she is concerned that the proposed changes in moving certain sexual education material from ninth grade to the middle school was first proposed in November but she didn't hear about it until a letter came home from school on January 17. She asked that the Board "take a step back" and educate parents who could then provide the information to their children rather than "taking the privilege" away from parents who are the only ones who should provide moral values.

Diana McAuley said that she knows her fifth grade child "is not ready to hear" sensitive sexual information. She said only parents can judge what is age appropriate for their children to hear and some teachers may give the impression that certain sexual activity is "okay."

OLD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Vice President Robert S. Magee and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to delete the first paragraph from the minutes

of the Budget Work Session held on January 7, 2003. Mrs. Haas had explained that Mr. Magee was referencing a historic passage calling for more school funding and was not referencing a current situation. The Board then voted unanimously to support the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Wolkow to endorse items on the Consent Agenda including the amended January 7 minutes and those from the January 11, 2003 Budget Work Session; the Monthly Report on Personnel for December; and Proposed Resolutions on Career and Technical Education Week and National School Counselor Week.

APPROVAL OF HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MASTER PLAN – FY 04-08

Mrs. Haas explained that she was asking the Board to endorse a Master Plan drafted to meet the requirements of the Federal ‘No Child Left Behind’ and State ‘Bridge to Excellence’ legislation, both passed in early 2002, without there having been received essential guidance on the requirements of either. She said it is “not typical” for the staff to present a version of a document that needs editing. But, she added, it is necessary for portions of the FY 04 plan to be included in the proposed operating and capital budgets which were to come before the Board for approval later in the evening. Mrs. Haas said a letter will accompany the approved plan to County Executive James M. Harkins explaining that there will be changes made during coming months as guidelines become more clear from the State and Federal governments. She said the document is not required in its final form to be in the hands of the County until August with a due date of October 1 for the Maryland State Department of Education. The Superintendent added that she is aware there are “inconsistencies” in language in the document including the need to “clean up” some objectives/goals. She said there will be a “tri-fold” document prepared for the public to help them understand the essentials of the plan within the next 30 days. Board Member R. Robin Rich cautioned that once the Board approves the Master Plan it becomes the Board’s plan, adding that it be made clear to all that the plan is being adopted as a first draft only because of the budget-imposed timeline. She added that the plan is “almost overwhelming” to understand even after several careful readings. Board Member Robert B. Thomas, Jr. said the Board and school system has been placed in a “very difficult situation” by the State’s inability to supply guidance on some of the requirements in its ‘Bridge to Excellence’ legislation. He said he is reluctant to vote for a positive action on the plan when parts of it are “not together” because of the lack of guidance from the State. He called it a “flawed process” and added that there are very stringent mandates for student achievement which have not been defined by the State. “They have blindfolded and handcuffed the staff,” Mr. Thomas added. Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Magee, the Board voted 6 to 1 (Mr. Thomas dissenting) to adopt the Master Plan. Mrs. Wolf urged that the system do all in its power to educate the public on what is in the document.

APPROVAL OF FY 04 OPERATING BUDGET

The Superintendent’s proposed operating budget for FY 2004 (2003-04 school year) has been before the Board for more than a month. The Board held four work sessions on the document identifying adjustments it wished to make in the Superintendent’s

recommendation. The final version contains the addition of four custodians at the Board's direction and the removal of 16 instructional specialists which had been double-listed in the original document. Budget Director John Cox said the amended document also contains a December 17 \$100,815 transfer approved by the County Council to fund "Back-Flow Preventers" at Joppatowne High School and Magnolia Middle School. He said the total budget proposal is \$304,646,067, including \$18,765,060 in "restricted funds" which had been counted separately in previous year's budgets. Mr. Cox said the proposed increase is slightly more than \$18 million over the FY 03 (current year) budget, representing about a 6.5 percent increase. Mr. Thomas said he has "great concerns" about sending a budget of "this size" to the county during times of "great fiscal difficulty." He recommended, instead, sending a budget which included only the top five additional priorities with others below a "cut line," not reflected in the official request. He said "this is not the right time" to be sending a budget with 57 new priorities such as the one being proposed. But, Mr. Wolkow said he feels this would be the time for the County to demonstrate its commitment to education by stretching to fund much of what is being requested at a time when other counties are cutting back or making modest increases. "We would be remiss if we submitted a bare bones budget," he said, adding that, as a total percentage of the County budget, its current commitment to the schools of 47.7 percent is actually down from the 52 to 54 percent which it had been providing several years ago. Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Wolkow, the Board voted 6 to 1 (Mr. Thomas dissenting) to approve the budget as proposed and send it to the County Executive.

APPROVAL OF REVISED FY 04 CAPITAL BUDGET

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to amend the capital budget request to include \$1,065,000 to allow for the purchase of 14 special education school buses, with air conditioning. The funds had been proposed to be included in the operating budget but was moved to the capital budget at the suggestion of the County government, Mrs. Haas told the Board.

PRESENTATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S STATE OF THE SCHOOLS ADDRESS

Mrs. Haas presented the Board with her annual State of the Schools address. She said it was a far different State of the Schools she was presenting this year since it contained more questions than it did answers. She told the Board that there was a "new era" in public education due to the passage of the 'No Child Left Behind' and the 'Bridge to Excellence' legislation, ushering in perhaps the biggest change since passage of the original special education legislation more than a quarter century before. Mrs. Haas said there is more of an emphasis on the system's "readiness level" to get where it has to go than the actual roadmap of how to get there. She said the new requirements for "individual disaggregated accountability" will place challenges on the system to make sure that every child meets expectations which are as yet not clearly defined. With such issues as the requirement that schools and individual students show "Adequate Yearly Progress" on new Maryland School Assessment and High School Assessment tests as well as the requirement to implement all-

day kindergarten, and the mandate that teachers and para-professionals be “highly qualified” on a scale not yet defined by the State, it will require not only school employees but the government and the community to come together in a common effort. She called for a “true dialog” with all elected officials to find ways to accomplish the new Federal and State mandates. She said that the very future of public education hangs in the balance of how successful those responsible for providing students with the tools to meet the requirements are. “Every truly great accomplishment is at first impossible,” she said.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – NEW BILLS PENDING BEFORE THE MARYLAND LEGISLATURE

School System Governmental Relations Liaison Kathy Carmello presented the Board with an update on the bills have been filed in the Maryland State Legislature which have a potential impact on public schools. The Board took action on only one proposal, voting unanimously to take no position on the slot machine bills pending before the legislature. Mr. Thomas suggested that Board Counsel Patrick Spicer examine the issues surrounding potential legislation surrounding the Howard County Public School System’s issues with public meetings.

DISCUSSION

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS TO CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Board of Education traditionally assigns one of its members as liaison and a second as alternate to each of its five Citizen Advisory Committees. By consensus the following assignments were made:

- Career and Technology – Liaison: Mrs. Wolf; Alternate: Mr. Wolkow
- Family Life – Liaison: Mrs. Troy; Alternate: Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler
- Safety/Security – Liaison: Mr. Magee; Alternate: Mr. Thomas
- Special Education – Liaison: Mrs. Rich; Alternate: Mrs. Troy
- Gifted Education – Liaison: Mr. Thomas; Alternate: Mrs. Rich

In addition, the Board decided to assign a liaison and alternate to its Calendar Committee. Assigned as Liaison was Mr. Wolkow and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler was named Alternate.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Thomas noted the presence of Council Members Roni Chenowith, Dick Slutzky and Dion Guthrie in the audience. He said there had been an “atrocious turnout” for the Board’s budget hearings with no more than ten people speaking to the Board about a proposed budget in excess of \$300 million. He added that he is concerned about the apparent “level

of apathy.” Mr. Thomas asked if there was an intent on the part of the system to take parents up on their request to provide instruction on sexual topics which they could then share with their children. Mrs. Troy said the Healthy Harford organization planned on holding such sessions in May. Mr. Wolkow thanked the Edgewood High School administration and PTA for its hosting of the meeting and providing of refreshments.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue its regular business meetings at Edgewood High School through March. Upcoming meetings will be held on February 10 (7:00 p.m.), February 24 (6:30 p.m.) and March 10 (7:00 p.m.) with a work session slated for the HEAT Center in Aberdeen on February 18 (6:30 p.m.). Consult the HCPS web site ([Meetings Calendar](#)) for a complete listing of meetings and agenda of upcoming sessions.

MORE INFORMATION

The school system is attempting to prevent duplications and reduce production/ mailing costs of the printed versions of B-Line. Those who are able to access B-Line on line and who would like their copy of the printed version of the document discontinued should e-mail the Director of Public Information: drmorrison.gs@hcps.k12.md.us; Or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

In addition, for those who would like to receive emergency or other important school announcements automatically at their e-mail address(es), check the schools-out.com initiative on the home page of the HCPS web site.

For more information on Board meetings or other matters affecting the Harford County Public Schools, contact the system's Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203; or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

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