



## Board Meeting

*August 11, 2003*

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

### **OPEN SESSION**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

President of the Board of Education of Harford County Robert S. Magee called the regular business meeting of the Board to order on August 11, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the gymnasium of Fallston Middle School. Mr. Magee asked that a quorum call be conducted which revealed that Board Member Karen L. Wolf was not present due to another commitment.

Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas was also absent due to a medical procedure. Assistant Superintendent for Operations Joseph C. Licata substituted for Mrs. Haas. Acting on the motions of Board Member Terry R. Troy and the seconds of Board Member Eugene C. Chandler the Board unanimously voted to delete Item 'G' – Superintendent's Report – from the agenda and to adopt the amended agenda. Mr. Magee led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **RECOGNITION**

**NATIONAL DISTINGUISHED ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL FOR MARYLAND –  
ALLYN A. WATSON, EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY**

Each year, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals takes part in the National Distinguished Principal of the Year program by nominating a Maryland elementary school principal as the state's Distinguished Principal. A representative from each of the 50

states is selected to take part in the program sponsored by the United States Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. All 50 of those Distinguished Principals nominated by their respective states will take part in a conference this fall and will compete for the National Elementary School Distinguished Principal award. Allyn A. Watson, 26-year educator and six-year principal at Edgewood Elementary School, was selected by the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals as the 2003-04 Maryland Elementary School Distinguished Principal of the Year. Mrs. Watson, a graduate of Aberdeen High School, was cited for her efforts and those of her staff in student achievement improvement at Edgewood Elementary where the school was recently removed from the "Title I School Choice" list by virtue of rising test scores. Using a variety of strategies including Saturday school, partnerships with local businesses and organizations including the US Army Environmental Center, and a close working relationship with parents, Mrs. Watson has created a "community of learners" at Edgewood Elementary. One of two Harford Countians to have been recognized last fall with an "Excellence in Minority Achievement" award from the Maryland State Department of Education, Mrs. Watson leads a school with many challenges including 56 percent of its students receiving free and reduced priced meals and with a highly transient enrollment. Mrs. Watson was honored by the Board of Education with a certificate recognizing her achievement.

#### MARYLAND COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD – CHRISTINE P. TOLBERT, HCRSPA

Each year, local retired teachers groups are invited to submit the name of an individual who has compiled an outstanding record of service to the community to the Maryland Retired Teachers Association for its Community Service Award. This year, the name of Christine P. Tolbert, a 29-year educator in the Harford County Public School System who retired in 1987, was submitted by the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association. Mrs. Tolbert, inducted as a member of the Harford County Public School Educator Hall of Fame in March 2002, was nominated based on her many years of active volunteerism with the Hosanna School and Berkley Crossroads Historic Preservation Project, as well as her continuing activities on behalf of students and educators in Harford County. At the Maryland Retired Teachers Association's annual convention held in Ocean City (MD) May 12 through 14, Mrs. Tolbert was announced as the winner of the Maryland Community Service Award. Mrs. Tolbert was cited for her efforts in hosting hundreds of students in tours of the restored Hosanna schoolhouse each year. Beginning in 1980, she has worked tirelessly to convince funding authorities and others to help restore and preserve what was the first public school in Harford County for African-American students. Hosanna had been founded in 1867 by the Federal government as one of three Freedmen's Schools in Harford County. Mrs. Tolbert facilitated the naming of the former school on the National Register of Historic Places. It is estimated Mrs. Tolbert had contributed 22,445 volunteer hours to the Hosanna project prior to her award. In addition, she and community activist Connie Beims have co-authored a book about the Berkley community in which Hosanna is located. The book was released in July with proceeds going directly to the Hosanna School and the Berkley Crossroads Historic Preservation Project. An average of 800 children have toured the Hosanna School each year since 1983. Students from both public and private schools in Harford and neighboring counties have taken part in the tours. History classes from several

community colleges, chapters of the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution and many church groups have also toured the one-room schoolhouse. Mrs. Tolbert – a former teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal and elementary supervisor in the Harford County Public Schools – announced at the meeting that she had been named the national Community Service Award winner at the National Retired Teachers Association convention held earlier in the summer in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mrs. Tolbert was presented with a Board certificate recognizing her outstanding accomplishments.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Peggy Roberts addressed the Board about her concerns with the delivery of special education services to her child. Deb Merlock, representing the Harford County Council of PTAs, expressed issues the organization has involving capital projects.

## ACTION ITEMS

## CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board acted unanimously to amend a portion of the minutes from the June 9, 2003 Board Business meeting as contained in the Consent Agenda. The Board then acted unanimously on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler to approve items contained on the Consent Agenda including Affirmation of Monthly Contract Awards; Minutes from the June 9 Business Meeting (as amended), the June 16 Work Session, and the June 23 Business Meeting; Monthly Report on Personnel; Approval of Paper Supplies; Approval of Appointment of Member to the Harford County Ethics Panel; Affirmation of Appeal Hearing Decisions; and Approval of Route 543 Transfer.

## DISCUSSION

## REVIEW OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR FY 2005

Supervisor of Planning and Construction Kathleen Sanner discussed aspects of the Capital Improvement Program for FY 2005 – due to be acted upon by the Board at its September 8, 2003 meeting – with the Board. Specifically, Mrs. Sanner provided an update on the current cost of school construction — \$156.80 per square foot – and, in response to a request from Board member Mark M. Wolkow, discussed a scope study now being done on those school buildings in the county currently not air conditioned. Mrs. Sanner said the complete air conditioning of Bel Air Middle School (\$4.5 million) and Joppatowne Elementary School (\$2.5 million) highlight that each project is unique, some allowing for the upgrade of existing equipment and some calling for complete new systems (if there is an existing system at the school). Mr. Licata said that a review is being conducted of property currently deeded to the school system to see if any should be surplus and turned back to the County government. He said the site at Woodbridge Center in Edgewood is one that appears to have no foreseeable use as a school site.

## PRESENTATIONS

### MGT MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW/UPDATE

Assistant Superintendent for Business Services John M. Markowski provided an update on implementation of the MGT of America, Inc. report provided by the consultant in December 2001. The report had looked at the operation of the Harford County Public School System, providing many accolades and some suggestions for improvement. In March 2002, a Steering Committee made up of school officials and community members, presented a report to the Board in which it reviewed the suggestions and outlined those that would be accepted for implementation, along with timelines and adjustments (if any). In addition, alternative recommendations were offered in some cases. Mr. Markowski's update looked at the March report, providing information on which of the planned implementations had been implemented, those that were still in progress, or those which had not been implemented (with reasons why the changes had been made). Of the 62 recommendations the March 2002 report had concluded should be implemented, 22 had been implemented by the July 25, 2003 cutoff date for the update. Of the total 142 recommendations, the July 25, 2003 report shows 69.7 percent (99) are either in progress or had already been accomplished.

### ACTION ITEMS

### APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS/PROMOTIONS

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board approved the appointment of Ginny L. Smith to be Educational Program Coordinator of Early Childhood Education. Acting on the motion of Board member Ruth R. Rich and the seconds of Mrs. Troy and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board appointed Ann-Marie P. Spakowski as Director of Special Education. Acting on the motion of Board Vice President Robert B. Thomas, Jr. and the second of Mr. Wolkow, the Board voted to appoint Jennifer A. Birkelien as Internal Auditor. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted to appoint Virginia M. Popiolek as Supervisor of Elementary and Middle School Physical Education and Health.

### DISCUSSION ITEM

### 2004 GRADUATION DATES

The Board received a report from Director of Public Information Donald Morrison and Director of Secondary Education David Volrath concerning recommended changes in graduation dates/times in 2004 for five of the school system's ten schools which grant diplomas/certificates. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Volrath explained that, after the graduation dates/times had been set for the Class of 2004 by the Board of Education in the spring of 2002, the Towson Center (where commencement ceremonies from C. Milton Wright, Bel Air, and Fallston high schools are held) informed the school system that, of the three dates previously listed as available – June 1, 2, and 3, 2004 – only June 1 would be available.

Since C. Milton Wright and Fallston high schools had been scheduled to hold commencement exercises at the Towson Center on June 2 and 3 respectively, a change in that schedule will be required. Mr. Volrath said the choice is to have those two schools return to their home campuses for the 2004 commencement ceremonies or make an adjustment which would have all three schools (including Bel Air High) graduate at the Towson Center on the morning, afternoon, and evening of June 1, 2004. Mr. Volrath said, if the two schools hold their ceremonies on school property, they will be faced with the predicament of moving the exercises inside should there be inclement weather. In that case, he said, the number of tickets per graduate would be extremely limited, meaning that many relatives and friends of the graduates would not be able to attend the ceremonies. Under the suggested adjusted schedule, C. Milton Wright High would hold commencement exercises at the Towson Center at 10:30 a.m. on June 1; Bel Air High at 2:30 p.m. on that date; and Fallston High at 6:30 p.m., also on that date. Mr. Volrath said that the principals of the impacted schools had consulted with their communities and had agreed to the proposed schedule. Mr. Morrison pointed out that the movement of two additional schools to the June 1 commencement schedule will necessitate the moving of North Harford and Havre de Grace high schools from their originally scheduled June 1 commencement dates to June 2 and June 3, respectively. He said the adjusted schedule would provide for three schools graduating on June 1 and 2, and two schools graduating on June 3 – the same number for each day that had originally been approved by the Board. Mr. Morrison added that the commencement ceremonies from John Archer School (early afternoon) and Harford Technical High School (late afternoon/early evening) on Friday, June 4, would not be impacted. Similarly, he said, Aberdeen and Joppatowne high schools would graduate as originally scheduled on June 2; and Edgewood High School would maintain its previously scheduled June 3 graduation date. Mr. Thomas suggested Ripken Stadium in Aberdeen be explored as a potential site for the graduation of schools where the classes are too large to be accommodated indoors at their home school. It was noted that the site is an outdoors venue and would also be subject to weather-related changes. The issue of Tuesday night commencements interfering with the attendance of County Council members (who traditionally have a Council meeting on that night) is another continuing issue which needs to be addressed, Mr. Thomas pointed out. Mr. Volrath said, while the Towson Center needs an answer on scheduling in short order, action could be delayed on the issue until the September 8, 2003 Board meeting.

## PRESENTATIONS

### QUARTERLY REPORT ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Mrs. Sanner provided the Board with a printed update on the various school construction projects which are currently underway. At the request of Mr. Magee, she commented only on those projects for which she had additional information. She said the Havre de Grace Track/Football Field project had been delayed due to weather-related issues but that a “remobilization” had taken place on July 7. She reminded the Board that the school system’s commitment to the project is \$700,000 to be used for the relocated football field, track and tennis courts. Mrs. Sanner said interviews had been conducted with potential architects/engineers involving the new middle/high school complex in the Bel Air area the

previous week and that a recommendation would be coming to the Board for an appointment of a firm at its September 8 meeting. She added that the improvement projects at C. Milton Wright High School and Southampton Middle School are underway with completion dates listed for October 1. She added that completion of the new parking lot at Southampton Middle School has been delayed due to the need to place utilities in a central island in the lot.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Thomas commended Mrs. Sanner for her “outstanding presentation” made at a recent County Council meeting. He said that a motion he had made in 1997, which was subsequently passed by the Board, to move Board meetings to locations in various areas of the county each quarter had seemed to be a good idea at the time, but poor attendance and other issues involved with the moves (including the deterioration of Board furniture) had showed the effort has not been fruitful. Therefore, he made a motion which was seconded by Mrs. Troy, that, starting with the January 2004 Board business meetings, all business meetings of the Board would be held at Bel Air Middle School. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Mr. Wolkow suggested the Board take a position on the capacity/enrollment percentage at which provisions of the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) ordinance would be implemented. He said that, if the school system expects support from the County Council and County Executive on funding for new projects, it is incumbent upon the Board to take a position on the APF percentage prior to the Council considering legislation on the issue in September. Mr. Thomas said the issue is a complex one and the Board cannot possibly study the issue and make a recommendation within three weeks. He said it is his belief the Board should take a position on the percentage determined by the Council/County Executive if and when the new legislation is passed. Mr. Licata warned that the State Board of Education is now looking at the issue of local capacity versus state rated capacity and the school system/Board should be careful about taking a position until the State Task Force involved with the study has completed its work. Mr. Wolkow reiterated his belief that he believes it would “be helpful” if the Board takes a position on the issue prior to Council action. Mr. Magee said he believes it is not in the best interest of the school system for the Board to make such a decision without looking first at all the ramifications of such a position. He pointed out that Mr. Wolkow and Mrs. Haas have been attending the APF Task Force meetings representing the Board and school system, respectively. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the new APF legislation proposal (115 percent of capacity) had been introduced by the Council while the APF Task Force is yet to have made its report. He said it would not be appropriate for the Board to take a position prior to the Task Force report and that, prior to some reports, the Board had not endorsed the 115 percent capacity trigger for the limitation of new projects. Mr. Wolkow said the APF Task Force was due to meet on August 21 and 28, but he is not aware of a date having been set for release of the task force recommendations. Mrs. Rich pointed out that the APF Task Force is made up of many people representing various constituencies making compromises and that whatever the recommendation on capacity/adequacy it should “not be for all time.” Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler thanked Mrs.

Troy for attending a recent church service important to his community.

#### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the group voted unanimously to support Mrs. Troy's motion that the meeting be adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Magee reviewed future meetings of the Board, disclosing the September 8 and 22 meetings would be held at Fallston Middle School and each would begin at 4:30 p.m. for work sessions slated to last through 6:30 p.m. and with business sessions scheduled those evenings to start at 7:00 p.m. He said the Board would then move to Magnolia Middle School for its October through December meetings for second and fourth Monday sessions starting at 7:00 and 6:30 p.m., respectively.

#### 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: [don.morrison@hcps.org](mailto:don.morrison@hcps.org); 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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