



## Board Meeting

*November 27, 2000*

David H. Galbreath, *President*  
Eugene C. Chandler, *Vice President*  
Thomas D. Hess  
Robert S. Magee  
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.  
Terry R. Troy  
Karen L. Wolf  
Daniel E. Purcell,  
*Student Representative*  
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

### **OPEN SESSION**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County was called to order on November 27, 2000, at 7:05 p.m. in the auditorium of Edgewood High School by Board President **David H. Galbreath**. Mr. Galbreath directed that a roll call be taken with all Board Members except **Thomas D. Hess** being present. Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** moved that the absence of Mr. Hess be recorded as "excused" due to a family emergency. Board Members **Karen L. Wolf** and **Terry R. Troy** seconded the motion which was supported unanimously by the Board. The proposed agenda was adopted as printed and those present were led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **RECOGNITION**

#### **HCPS EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME**

Beginning last month, the Board of Education of Harford County started a tradition of inaugurating two retired Harford County Public School educators into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame. The educators, each of whom must have taught or been an administrator in the school system for at least 20 years, are selected by the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association (HCRSPA) based on their extraordinary contributions to students and the school

system. The honorees are featured in the "Harford Schools" newspaper and have their pictures placed on a wall in the Board Room of the school system's central office at 45 E. Gordon Street in Bel Air. In addition, they or their representative are invited to appear at a subsequent Board meeting where a plaque and Board certificate are presented. The November inductees into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame were **Alden H. Halsey** and the late **Violet D. Merryman**. Mr. Halsey spent 37 years in the Harford County Public School System, the last 20 as its Deputy Superintendent before his retirement in 1993. Mrs. Merryman, who passed away in 1998, contributed 36 years to the local system as a teacher, principal, and supervisor. In addition, she was a member of the Board for nine years, serving one year as the body's president. Mr. Halsey was on hand to accept the honor while Mrs. Merryman's nephew **Jim Foard** and niece **Carolyn Null** accepted the plaque and certificate on behalf of their aunt.

### **ACHIEVEMENT COUNTS PRESENTATION TO THE HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**June Streckfus**, executive director of the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education, presented the Board of Education and the Harford County Public Schools with a plaque recognizing the system's pilot role in the "Achievement Counts" initiative. The program, which was awarded the Harford County Chamber of Commerce "Special Projects" first place award in October, saw 45 business volunteers trained to go into the ninth grade classrooms in the county to emphasize the importance of students putting together positive attendance and academic records in high school. Ms. Streckfus said an additional 80 business representatives took part in this year's program with every ninth grade class being addressed. She said that Harford County highlighted the effort last year and that nine schools and 3,100 students were addressed by a total of 64 speakers. Ms. Streckfus said this year a Baltimore radio station is conducting a pledge campaign where students promise to achieve an attendance rate of at least 95 percent and strive to maintain A/B grade averages. She said that Fallston High had the largest number of students who signed the pledge. Ms. Streckfus said that nine school systems in the state are now taking part in "Achievement Counts" and that "you are the stellar model" in the program aimed at making the connection between school and the workplace for students.

### **FALL 2000 STATE SPORTS CHAMPIONS**

At the conclusion of each interscholastic sports season, the Board of Education honors those teams or individuals who have won Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) championships, presenting team members or individuals with certificates. The Board also reads the names of individuals or teams which won Regional championships or District or County titles where no Regional competition takes place. During the fall, 2000 season, one local team – C. Milton Wright High School's girls cross country team – won a MPSSAA championship, taking the Class 4A title. The Board presented

certificates to coaches **Eric Clark** and **Murray Davis** along with certificates from Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** to team members. Student Representative to the Board **Daniel E. Purcell** read the names of the teams or individuals which/who had won Regional or County championships. Mr. Purcell said six local teams won Regional titles: North Harford High School boys cross country team (Class 2A, East Region), North Harford High School girls cross country team (Class 2A, East Region), North Harford High School girls soccer team (Class 2A, East Region), Bel Air High School girls soccer team (Class 3A, North Region), C. Milton Wright High School boys soccer team (Class 4A, East Region), and Fallston High School girls volleyball team (Class 3A, North Region). In addition, Mr. Purcell said the Bel Air boys volleyball team won the county championship, the C. Milton Wright High School cheerleading team won the "large squad" county title, the Aberdeen Eagles cheerleading team won the "small squad" county championship, and **Chelsea Strength** of Joppatowne High won the individual cheerleading championship.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Paul Schatz**, president of the Harford County Education Association (HCEA), said that the school system and HCEA must move toward a collaboration involving negotiations. He said the two sides must work toward satisfying the other parties needs, focusing on the future, rather than concentrating on personalities. He urged the two parties to participate in training that would lead to joint collaborative bargaining, especially in the area of employee benefits. He said the two sides should work as equals and added the "top down" model employed by the Board and Superintendent in recent negotiations was not workable. He added that about 150 HCEA members were in attendance, wearing "We can do better" badges to illustrate the point, and that several would address the Board.

**Tom Berg**, North Harford Middle School teacher, addressed the Board on health care issues. He said the action taken by the Superintendent just prior to the end of the last school year which changed some aspects of employee health coverage brought "nothing but shame" on the system and represented a step backward for employees, adding that it was "covert and immoral." He said the superintendent used a "loophole" in the contract to make "sudden and drastic" changes that turned the former "Cadillac" employee health care program into a "Chevette." He called the changes a "mandate" rather than a negotiation, and said HCEA membership on the benefits committee had been of a "token" nature.

**Brian Rheinhardt**, who said he was a third year teacher at C. Milton Wright High School and an alma mater of the school, complained that employees were not educated properly about the change in insurance coverage and cost. He said that he drives daily from his home in Carroll County to Harford and hoped to teach in the county for 27 additional years, but the recent changes in health care have made him reconsider that ambition.

**Jeff Fradel** of Belcamp, a teacher and member of HCEA, thanked Mrs. Wolf for information she recently supplied HCEA on health care choices. He said the passing on of health costs to employees was "short-sighted," and the process of its implementation was "top down."

**Carol Kehring**, an eight year teacher, said the cost of her prescriptions had doubled, and said she resented the unilateral implementation with no union input on the health care changes.

**Stu Chapman**, a teacher at Harford Technical High School, said the school system had turned down the county government's offer to save health care costs and that HCEA had been given only token representation on the committee which made recommendations on the changes. He urged the system to call in experts from the National Education Association who could help cut health costs without impacting employees. He said the local system should take part in a statewide health care consortium.

**Pat White** of Havre de Grace said she realizes there is a true health care crisis involving increasing costs but, speaking for herself and the memory of the late **Chris Haggett**, said that the health benefits committee had provided only "cursory" attention to teacher involvement. She said Ms. Haggett had often talked about the "illusion of inclusion" and urged that teachers be a real part of the process.

**Pat Benedict**, president of the Harford County Council of PTAs, said she had been proud of the way parents, the school leadership and the Board had worked together to solve the mold and mildew problems at Edgewood Middle School. In keeping with that proactive stance, she introduced **Deb Merlock** who presented the Board with resolution from the HCCPTA calling for a comprehensive indoor air quality plan which would convene a joint action team consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, nurses, custodians, facilities management, representatives from the Health Department, and a certified industrial hygienist to prepare and implement a plan in accordance with the EPA's "Tools for Schools Kit" to include regular inspection, testing, and public reporting of air quality in schools. The resolution calls for adequate funding to appropriately train staff to provide for testing and contaminate removal. The resolution further calls for local, state, and Federal legislation on a Comprehensive Indoor Air Quality Plan for schools to include mold and other microbial contaminants.

**Linda Frisch** of the American Lung Association and parent of students at North Bend Elementary School, supported the resolution and called air quality in schools a "public health issue." She said there are 25 to 30 students at North Bend who are experiencing problems with air quality due to their personal health situations and that there are an estimated 3,600 students in the county suffering from asthma.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **REPORT OF CITIZENS BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED BUDGET PRIORITIES**

**Cindy Mumby, Robert Lieb, and Warren Hamilton** of the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee, presented the Board with the recommendations of that committee for the 2001-02 system's general fund operating budget. In priority order, the committee recommended 18 areas of need in the budget with several additional considerations. Recommendations include: enhancement of achievement and school safety by developing a preK through 12 alternative program for disruptive and violent students at a separate facility; increase of per pupil funding, ensure competitive salaries and benefits for employees; fully implement an integrated program for technology instruction; more teachers to achieve class size as defined by the school system; attract and retain successful teaching personnel; utilize the services of a budget consultant in improving efficiencies and cost effectiveness; support teachers through mentoring and curricular implementation; providing adequate funding for consumable curriculum and computer supplies; maintain extracurricular programs at all levels; target computer technology expenditures from high school downward to elementary; adequate staffing to maintain school facilities; ensure competitiveness of salaries and benefits; improve gifted and talented program; pursue options for reducing operating costs including privatization and outsourcing; provide funding for high school assessments; restore field trip funding; and investigate the most cost effective methods of financing technology including leasing and lease/purchase.

Other considerations included the providing of staff and training necessary for successful inclusion of special education students; the maintaining of adequate funding for instructional assistants and limiting their function to instructional duties; the increasing of school based Special Education staffing; working with the business community to develop career development programs for non-college bound students. Mr. Lieb said the committee's focus has been on safety, materials of instruction, exceptional teachers, technology and class size.

#### **REPORT OF SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

**Bernard F. Barnes**, assistant superintendent for education services, joined by the Board's Citizen Advisory Committee on Safety/Security chairman pro-tem **Steven Weeks**, provided the Board with a summary of the work done by the committee during the year it has been in existence. Dr. Barnes said the group had been formed by the Board in November 1999 as an outgrowth of a

recommendation from the committee of law enforcement officers which had been formed by Superintendent Haas following the April, 1999 Columbine High School shootings. He said the committee had worked diligently, though its membership had declined during the 1999-2000 school year and had completed a study of attitudes toward school safety in about half of the local public schools. Mr. Weeks presented the Board with the findings of the committee, summarized into chart form on 15 questions which had been asked of students (in secondary schools), parents, and staff at the schools. Dr. Barnes then presented the Board with the superintendent's recommendations concerning the committee which included: the Board receive the report and thank the committee for its hard work; the Board reconstitute the committee, providing for 16 citizen members, two from each high school attendance areas, based on an application process; the Board provide the committee with a clear charge indicating its advisory capacity; the Board direct the committee to meet on a quarterly basis with sub-committees formed to work on special issues, and the first meeting of the reconstituted committee be on January 11, 2001; the Board appoint one of its members as a liaison to the committee; and the Assistant Superintendent for Education Services be the staff liaison to the committee along with appropriate members of the school staff as ex-officio members.

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Mrs. Troy and **Robert S. Magee**, the Board voted unanimously to endorse the superintendent's recommendations. Mrs. Wolf suggested and the Board concurred that Mr. Thomas be the primary liaison to the committee with Mr. Magee as alternate and that the two Board Members write a charge for the committee which would be brought to the Board for its concurrence. Dr. Barnes recommended that the five members of the committee which had remained faithful in their attendance be continued as members of the group, having expressed a desire to do so.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **ACTION ON MOTION TO RENAME HAVRE DE GRACE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD**

Mr. Magee, with a second from Mrs. Wolf and Board Vice President **Eugene C. Chandler** moved that the proposal to rename the Havre de Grace High School stadium field the "James R. Harris Field" be removed from the table. Mr. Harris had been the longtime football coach and athletic director at the school prior to his death in 1993. He was also a graduate of the school. The field had been unofficially renamed in his honor shortly after his death. The Board had taken action to begin the 60-day layover requirement for the renaming of the field at its September 11, 2000 meeting. At the current meeting, the Board subsequently voted unanimously to approve the original motion and the field will now officially be known as the "James R. Harris Field."

### **DISCUSSION ON PROPOSAL FOR PILOT PROGRAM USING METAL**

## **DETECTORS IN TWO HIGH SCHOOLS**

During a previous Board meeting, Mr. Thomas had suggested that the school system pilot the use of metal detectors at one or more of its schools. Several adults and students expressed a desire to comment on the proposal.

**Gaye Bowen Hull**, a parent, said that she opposes the use of standing metal detectors because they would delay the start of the school day and because of the "invasive nature" they would create. She pointed to the November 13<sup>th</sup> resolution by the Harford County Regional Association of Student Councils (HCRASC) opposed to the proposal and added that metal detectors could give a "false illusion of safety." Instead, she said there should be more programs aimed at students who may cause problems and more law enforcement presence in the school. She asked, if a pilot is instituted, what would constitute indication of success.

**Ian Hull**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of HCRASC, said a plank had been adopted by the group to oppose metal detectors. He said they would disturb the tranquility of a school and urged that the Board move away from machines aimed at making schools safe and go more toward proactive measures with students.

**Stephanie Genco**, another member of HCRASC from Fallston High, urged that the number of police officers or use of surveillance cameras be considered rather than metal detectors. She said lockdowns could be practiced in school. Ms. Genco added that there is a need for more counselors and their deeper involvement in dealing with troubled students.

**Heather Kirkwood**, president of the North Harford High School Honor Society, said the metal detectors would "give the façade of danger" at schools. She felt she had never felt unsafe at school, but metal detectors would shatter that peaceful feeling.

**Pat Benedict**, speaking as a parent of Aberdeen High School students, said she "hates" the idea of metal detectors and that she has "worked far too long" to make schools a welcoming place than to see that spirit compromised by the devices. She urged there be more social workers assigned to the schools as well as drug counselors, instead of going toward metal detectors.

**Sam Fromille**, student member of Fallston High's School Improvement Team, said metal detectors are not a realistic answer to potential school violence, pointing out they were in use at Columbine High. He said it was only the students' use of portable communication devices that alerted authorities to the shootings.

Mr. Thomas said he had received information from an expert, **Michael Dorn** of Georgia about metal detectors and urged the Board devote a work session in

January to the issue where they could hear from the national expert. Mrs. Wolf thanked the students for their presentations and asked about a plan which had been considered to visit schools in Washington, D.C. where metal detectors are in use. Dr. Barnes said those plans had been put on hold because of the mold/mildew difficulties at Edgewood Middle School, but could be reinstated. Mrs. Troy asked how relocatable classrooms would be impacted by fixed metal detectors. Mr. Purcell urged the Board to heed the opinions expressed by students and pointed to a series of letters which had been written to the Board by Fallston High School students in one of its government classes.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **ACTION ITEMS**

### **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to endorse items on the Consent Agenda, including the minutes of the November 13<sup>th</sup> Executive and Business meetings and the November 20<sup>th</sup> work session; a proposed resolution on Retiring Employees; and the Monthly Contract Awards.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM REVISION**

**Joseph P. Licata**, assistant superintendent for operations, presented the Board with a proposal to delete \$110,000 from the state capital funds request in the area of asbestos removal at the Aberdeen High School North building. The Board had approved the request in August, including the asbestos abatement proposal. During the review of the submission by state officials on October 27<sup>th</sup>, it was determined that the asbestos removal project was not eligible for state funding. Mr. Licata said the request for local funds for the project will be retained. Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation to delete the project from the state request.

### **BOARD COMMENTS**

With respect to the opposition on metal detectors by students and others, Mr. Thomas said that two years ago similar opposition had been expressed against the change in regulations on backpacks and on student clothing and surveillance cameras. He said action has been taken on all three issues, with changes implemented in some areas. "No matter what the Board does, some segment of the population is not going to like it," he said, adding that, "I'm not in this for popularity, I want safe schools for faculty, staff and students." He urged the Board to consider all sides of the issue before making up



its mind against the proposal.

Mr. Galbreath said he is not personally for the use of metal detectors but said it is incumbent on the Board to view a video that is available and to hear from the national expert on the topic.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy, and the second of Mrs. Wolf, Board acted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is set for Monday, December 11, 2000 in the cafeteria at Edgewood High School. The second business meeting of the Board in December will be held at the same location on Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. Both meetings are due to begin at 7:00 p.m. The Board will then move its regular meetings to the Bel Air Middle School gymnasium for the January through March quarter, before ending the year's meetings during the April through June quarter at North Harford High School's auditorium. Board budget work sessions have been set for January 13, 2001 (Bel Air Middle School, gymnasium, 7:00 p.m.); January 9<sup>th</sup> (HEAT Center, 7:00 p.m.), January 11<sup>th</sup> (HEAT Center, 7:00 p.m.), Norrisville Elementary School (cafetorium, 9:00 a.m. until noon); (if needed) January 16<sup>th</sup> (HEAT Center, 7:00 p.m.), and January 29<sup>th</sup> (Bel Air Middle School media center, 7:00 p.m.). A schedule of all Board meetings, including work sessions, is available on the HCPS web site – [www.co.ha.md.us/harford\\_schools](http://www.co.ha.md.us/harford_schools).

## **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](mailto:Drmorrison.gs@hcps.k12.md.us); Or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

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