



Board Meeting

June 25, 2001

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 – Board President **David H. Galbreath** called the regular business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County to order at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of North Harford High School. Mr. Galbreath asked for a roll call with all Board members reporting present. Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** moved that the agenda be approved as presented. The Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda. Since it was the final regular meeting for Student Representative **Daniel E. Purcell**, Mr. Galbreath asked that Mr. Purcell lead those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

HCPS EDUCATORS HALL OF FAME

The Board of Education presented plaques, certificates, and laminated copies of the articles from “Harford Schools” which had been done on three retired educators who have been added to the Harford County Public Schools Educators Hall of Fame. Nominated in May to be members of the Hall (but unable to attend the May 22nd Board meeting to be inducted) were the husband and wife team of **Raymond J.** and **Esther E. Dombrowski**. Mr. and Mrs. Dombrowski each were educators at Bel Air High School for 32 years, Mrs. Dombrowski serving as the school’s librarian from 1952 through 1984; and Mr. Dombrowski as the school’s instrumental music teacher and director of bands from 1953 through 1985. Mr. Dombrowski was chosen as the charter “Maryland Outstanding

Instrumental Music Teacher” in 1979 and his bands were honored as being among the best in the nation, having been chosen to represent the state in the giant 1976 Philadelphia Bicentennial parade. Mrs. Dombrowski, a lifelong Harford resident and graduate of Bel Air High when it was located on E. Gordon Street, took the fledgling Bel Air High library from its infancy into one of the most respected media centers in the state. At one point, the library served more than 3,500 student-patrons. Mrs. Dombrowski was also in charge of the Bel Air Marching Bobcat Band Front. Mr. Dombrowski has continued following retirement as a professional musician and Mrs. Dombrowski served until two years ago as archivist for the local newspaper.

Also honored was **Louis S. Seidel**, 37 ½ year educator in the school system, 32 of those years as an elementary school principal, serving in six different schools. His most notable accomplishment was helping to open the “new” Hickory Elementary School in 1965 after the building had been converted from being the all-black Central Consolidated School. He was a calming force during that potentially difficult time. Mr. Seidel used his humor and abiding respect for others to further education goals at each of the schools in which he served.

Also honored were members of the four Harford County Public School Destination Imagination (DI) teams which qualified through Regional and State tournaments to compete in the “Global” championships held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee over the Memorial Day weekend. Honored were the Bel Air Middle School Triplicity (A), Mystery Loves Company (A), and Anonymously Yours (A) teams which finished 14th, seventh, and second, respectively, in their areas of competition; and the Southampton Middle School Anonymously Yours Team which finished 28th in the event.

In addition, the Board honored the individuals and teams which won Region and State Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association (MPSSAA) championships during the recently completed spring season. The Board presented certificates to the Fallston High School Boys Lacrosse team which won the Class 3A championship; and to **Cara Wettlaufer** of C. Milton Wright High School, who won the MPSSAA 4A State girls championship in the 1600 meter run. Mr. Purcell read the names of the Harford teams and individuals which had won regional championships in track and field, tennis, lacrosse, softball, and baseball.

Aberdeen High School Principal **David Volrath** introduced students from his school who were part of the band, orchestra and chorus trips taken to London, England; and to Vienna, Austria during the December 2000/January 2001 time period. The groups (orchestra and band to London; and chorus to Vienna) had been invited to perform in the musical and cultural world capitals. The students presented each Board member with a framed memento of the trip. Mr. Volrath and the students thanked the Board, the Superintendent, and their community for making it possible for the students and their chaperons to make the trip.

Jeffery Ayers, director of the Facilities Management Department, introduced those schools which had won the awards as having the “cleanest schools” in the county. Mr. Ayers explained that inspections are done at each of the 50 schools in the county – one announced

and the other a “surprise” walk through. Monetary awards are presented to the top three scoring elementary schools and the top scoring middle and high schools. First place winners at the Elementary level were Roye-Williams, North Bend and Dublin; with runners up awards going to Fountain Green, Darlington, John Archer, Bakerfield, and Emmorton. At the middle school level, Southampton Middle School was the winner with Fallston, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace being declared as runners up. At the high school level, Fallston and Havre de Grace tied for first with North Harford and Harford Technical being chosen as runners up. Schools received certificates from the superintendent in recognition of their achievement. Custodians from the winning schools received checks and certificates at a custodial recognition ceremony held on June 27.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Debbie Merlock, representing the Abingdon Elementary School PTA commented that Abingdon Elementary School had opened nine years ago and that **Larry Mills** had been the school’s only principal throughout that time. She noted that Mr. Mills has been transferred to a similar position at Youth’s Benefit Elementary School and wished him well in his new assignment while welcoming newly appointed Abingdon principal **Kathy Burr**, who has been transferred from Joppatowne Elementary. Mrs. Merlock also noted that the Board had added “school performance” to its proposed balancing enrollment policy but said that the public should be aware that “one test does not present an accurate picture of a school.”

Rayma Beer, representing the Havre de Grace High School Athletic Boosters and the Community Projects of Havre de Grace, Inc. read a letter from **David Glen**, president of the Boosters, urging that the renovation of the Havre de Grace High athletic complex be placed in the capital budget. Mr. Glen’s letter decried the loss of outstanding athlete **Megan Walsh** who had recently transferred from Havre de Grace High to Rising Sun High School in Cecil County because the local school does not have a usable track.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN WORKING COPY

Bernard F. Barnes, the school system’s assistant superintendent for Education Services and the designee for matters involving safety and security, presented the Board with a “working copy” of the safety/security plan. Dr. Barnes reminded the Board that it had appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee for Safety and Security and had restructured the committee once. He said recommendations had been submitted to the Board on a wide variety of safety/security issues including the development of a system wide safety plan, influencing behaviors of students to produce positive school climates, securing school environments, training school personnel, and crisis management. Dr. Barnes said the Board had charged the superintendent at its February 26, 2001 meeting to develop an integrated safety/security plan for submission in June. The draft plan will be placed on the school

system web site and input will be sought from the public.

Both Board Members Mr. Thomas, **Robert S. Magee**, and **Thomas D. Hess** said it was time for the Board to take definitive action on parts of the plan to improve school safety/security. Mr. Thomas said he wanted an August 31, 2001 deadline attached for the Board to take action on parts of the plan, adding that the issue has dragged since the fall of 1999. He said there may be Federal grants available to fund some of the proposed programs. Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** suggested that items with significant price tags should be separated from those that can be accomplished without considerable expenditures. Mr. Purcell said he felt that the summer is a difficult time to obtain comment, especially from students.

ACTION ITEMS

ADOPTION OF THE FY 2002 OPERATING BUDGET

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the seconds of **Eugene C. Chandler** and **Terry R. Troy**, the Board voted unanimously to approve the FY 2002 school system operating budget. The budget contains \$246,491,422 in the general fund, \$19,846,997 in the restricted programs, and \$8,338,392 in the Food and Nutrition program. Budget Director **John Cox** told the Board that the Maryland allocation had come in \$74,000 under projections due to a slight increase in students statewide beyond what had been forecast. Assistant Superintendent for Business Services **John Markowski** said there had been “some migration” from more expensive employee health plans which provided some funds in that area to be applied to shortfalls. Mr. Cox said that Harford County will fund \$138,335,279 of the FY 2002 operating budget while the State will contribute \$103,936,945 including the second year of the Teachers Challenge Grant. Federal support in the operating budget was set at \$450,000.

APPROVAL OF BOUNDARY EXCEPTION POLICY/PROCEDURES

There were four citizens who spoke to the Board on the issue of the proposed Boundary Exception policy and procedures.

A. Michael Marzullo, representing Homestead/Wakefield Elementary School said that the “loss of a trusted day care provider is not a trivial matter” in pointing out that the overcrowding problem is “not an overnight issue” and not directly traceable to boundary exceptions. He said the lack of consideration to siblings in the proposed policy is a problem and that a gradual phase in of the new regulations might soften the blow to families.

Cindy Mumby, a Ring Factory Elementary School parent, said that if grandfathering is included in the new procedures (allowing students on boundary exception to continue their attendance at a school outside their district for an undetermined period of time) it would be a mistake and would postpone solving the problem created by parents using day care as a reason to have students excepted out of their home school district and into schools with nearby day care centers.

Dawn Arruda of Abingdon agreed with Mrs. Mumby that grandfathering should not be permitted. She added that Ring Factory Elementary School continues to have a need for relocatable classrooms.

Mary Almasy of Bel Air, commenting on the proposed safety/security plan, said two-way communications is a necessity as is a dress code and character education. She commented on the grandfathering issue with boundary exceptions and said there is no indication when the new procedures would go into effect. She was told it would be immediate, provided the Board adopted the proposals.

The Board made a series of motions on the proposed policies/procedures, voting 2 to 5 to oppose a motion made by Mrs. Wolf and seconded by Mrs. Troy that an exception be made to the end of day care boundary exceptions when the care is being provided by a family member (Mr. Galbreath and Mrs. Wolf voted for the motion).

The Board passed by a 6 to 0 vote (Mr. Galbreath was not present for the vote) to use the “old” classroom size figures (20 for kindergarten, 25 for first through third grade, and 27 for fourth and fifth) in determining when boundary exceptions would not be permitted at a grade level.

Mr. Hess, with a second from Mrs. Troy moved that the word “elementary” be stricken from a portion of the policy which permits boundary exceptions as a “perk” for school employees. The Board voted 6 to 0 in favor of the motion (Mr. Galbreath was not present). The fourth motion was made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mrs. Wolf and Mrs. Troy that those boundary exceptions which had already been granted prior to a hold being placed on them with the consideration of the new procedures be allowed to stand. The first vote ended in a tie, 3 to 3 (with Mr. Galbreath abstaining), but the Board President changed his vote to the affirmative, creating the 4-3 passage of the motion (Mr. Magee, Mr. Hess, and Lt. Col. Ret. Chandler dissenting).

The fifth motion, made by Mrs. Wolf and seconded by Mrs. Troy, that current boundary exceptions be grandfathered for one more year, failed by 3 to 4 with Mr. Galbreath joining the motion maker and seconder in voting in favor of the measure.

A sixth motion, this one made by Mr. Hess and seconded by Mrs. Troy, that students entering grades five, eight, and 12 on boundary exception be grandfathered for their final year next school year at that level. The motion passed 5 to 2 with Mr. Magee and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler dissenting.

The seventh motion, made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Hess and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, that the proposed guidelines on boundary exceptions as submitted by the superintendent, as amended by Board votes, be approved. The motion passed 5 to 2 with Mrs. Wolf and Mr. Galbreath dissenting.

By consensus, the Board agreed to consider passing the policy that authorizes the procedures at its August 13th meeting, permitting the traditional 30 day holdover for a

change in Board policy.

Essentially, the new boundary exception guidelines cut off the granting of day-care related exceptions into a school where the enrollment is at 95 percent of state rated capacity or greater and/or whose enrollment at the various grade levels exceeds the numbers listed in the third motion passed by the Board.

AGENDA MODIFICATION

Due to the approaching 10:00 p.m. curfew, the Board voted to amend its agenda to consider Consent Agenda action items F, G, H. The motion, made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mrs. Wolf was approved 7 to 0. The subsequent motion to approve those items – Approval of Educational Facilities Master Plan 2001, Award of Contract for Refuse Collection, and Promotions/Appointments – made by Mrs. Wolf and seconded by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, was approved unanimously. The refuse collection contract was awarded to Waste Management of Maryland (Baltimore) in the amount of \$111,645.44. **Joseph A. Schmitz** was appointed as a high school principal (subsequently assigned to Edgewood High School), and **Larissa L. Santos** was approved as a secondary school assistant principal (subsequently assigned to Edgewood High School).

EXTENSION OF CURFEW

With the 10:00 p.m. curfew imminent, Mrs. Wolf moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that the meeting be extended until 10:30 p.m. in order to consider items D and I on the agenda – Approval of Resolution for Education Issues Summit and Approval of Contract Award for Performance Audit. Mr. Galbreath said he was “not in favor” of either item and that he would vote in favor of the motion to extend but would not stay for the remainder of the meeting. (The vote must be unanimous to extend the meeting). The vote to extend was 7 to 0.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS D & I

Mr. Thomas moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that the proposed resolution outlining Mr. Thomas’ previous call for an educational summit involving government, school, and community leaders by August 11, 2001; and the Approval of the Contract Award for a Performance Audit was approved by a 6 to 0 vote of the Board. The Education Issues Summit resolution calls for the Superintendent to make arrangements for the summit, including but not limited to the preparation of all necessary background documents; sites, dates and times of the summit meeting(s); and a list of goals and objectives for the summit; and that the summit be convened no later than August 11, 2001. The Performance Review motion awarded the contract to MGT of America at a cost of \$199,985.

OPPORTUNITY FOR BOARD MEMBERS TO PRESENT NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thomas provided information that Joppatowne High School’s Envirothon team had won the State championship over the weekend, making it the school’s fourth Maryland title in

the ten years it has participated. Joppatowne High will now compete in the National Envirothon for the fourth time, where the school's team has finished as high as second.

Mr. Thomas said he was very disturbed about "what occurred here in the last 20 minutes" referring to Mr. Galbreath's decision to leave the meeting before it was concluded. "I won't tolerate" a Board member disagreeing with the Board's decisions and "getting up and walking out." Mr. Thomas called his motion on the Education Summit resolution "the most important I've ever made," and said Mr. Galbreath's decision not to stay for that vote was particularly disturbing.

Mrs. Wolf praised the work done by Mr. Purcell during the past year as student representative and led the Board in saying farewell to him.

Mr. Hess said he supported Mr. Thomas' views on Mr. Galbreath's exit and said he is hopeful the Board will consider a change in its by-laws which would end the rotation method of having the most senior member of the Board not to have served as president ascend to the office without being voted in. He said there needed to be clear expectations for the president and added it was "fitting" that Mr. Galbreath was not present for the end of his last meeting as president.

Mrs. Troy said that Mr. Purcell had been a "great inspiration to us all."

Mr. Purcell said that his time as student representative had been an "experience" and one that he could not have predicted its course 17 months ago when he was elected by members of the Harford County Regional Association of Student Councils. "Little did I know then what was in store for me," he said.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Magee moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The Board voted 6 to 0 to do so and the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will hold two regular business meetings during the summer – the first on Monday, July 9; and the second on Monday, August 13, 2001. Both meetings will be held at Southampton Middle School (lecture hall, 7:00 p.m.)

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.

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