



Board Meeting

January 14, 2002

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

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Board President **Eugene C. Chandler** called the regular business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 14, 2002, in the multi-purpose room of Magnolia Middle School. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler directed that a roll call be conducted of Board members with all Board members present except Thomas D. Hess. Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** moved that the agenda be amended to move Item A-3, Approval of Architect for the Joppatowne Elementary School Modernization project, from the Consent Agenda to the first item under Old Business. Board Vice President **Terry R. Troy** seconded the motion which was approved unanimously by the Board. Mrs. Wolf then moved and Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** seconded that the amended agenda be approved. The Board voted unanimously to approve that motion. Those present were led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by Mr. Thomas.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kimberly Marksman of Fountain Green, a science teacher, said she has children attending Fountain Green Elementary and the John Archer School. She said John Archer is a “wonderful” school but said she is not pleased with the amount of speech therapy her child is receiving.

Debbie Barm, who said she has a student at John Archer School, stated that she supports two-way communications from the classroom to the school office. And, she said competitive salaries need to be paid to teachers to retain them in the county. Mrs. Barm added that she is concerned about the one mile from school limit imposed in order to be eligible for transportation services. She said “nowadays” it is not safe to expect elementary-aged students to walk that distance to school.

Deplane Lewis, who is a parent in the Youth’s Benefit Elementary School district and president of the YBES Education Foundation, said she supports the two-way communication between classrooms and the school office, especially on a large campus with three buildings such as Youth’s Benefit.

Colleen Lyons, co-president of the Youth’s Benefit Elementary School PTA, asked the Board to support two-way communications between classrooms and the school office as its top priority for funding. She pointed to a finding in the recent MGT management audit citing the need to hire a safety and security director for the system.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Thomas moved and Past President **David H. Galbreath** seconded that Items 1 and 2 on the Consent Agenda be approved. Item 1 was the minutes of the December 10th and December 17, 2001 Board Business Meetings; and Item 2 was the Affirmation of Monthly Contract Awards. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF ARCHITECT FOR JOPPATOWNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** told the Board that the Joppatowne Modernization project had been deferred by the State Interagency Committee for School Construction (IAC), meaning that it was not a certainty that state money would be available for the project in the upcoming fiscal year. Assistant Superintendent for Operations **Joseph P. Licata** said that planning money for the project had been requested from the County for FY03, but, without state endorsement of the project, architectural design could not proceed. He said \$25,000 had been previously allocated by the county for a scope study of the project which would allow for the educational specifications process to occur. He said planning for the project could be broken into two phases – scope study and architectural design. He said that Banta Campbell Architects, Inc. had been selected by a review committee to perform the scope study and the architectural design, if the project is ultimately approved by the state on appeal and planning money is approved by the county. Mr. Licata said the architect had agreed to accept the planning responsibility conditionally on the project being approved. Mr. Thomas established that the project is up for appeal to the Board of Public Works and suggested that it was “prudent” to go forward with the scope study while the appeal was being considered. Mr. Licata said schematic plans had to be submitted to state review

officials by September 1st in order for the project to be in the pipeline to receive state construction funding for FY04. Mr. Thomas moved and Mrs. Wolf seconded that Banta Campbell Architects be commissioned to perform the scope study for the Joppatowne Elementary School Modernization project at a fee not to exceed the \$25,000 already appropriated by the county. The Board voted unanimously to support the motion.

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT POLICY

Acting on the motion of Mr. Hess and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to endorse an update of the Annual Report Policy with the correction of the legal citation reference. The school system has complied with the policy by publishing financial statements in local newspapers as well as with the Superintendent's Annual Reports and other publications.

APPROVAL OF REVISED HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Mrs. Haas told the Board that the Maryland State Board of Education has asked all local school systems to review its safety plans to ensure they have provisions to guard against harassment of students. The State Board has included in its Education That is Multicultural bylaw a provision that students be free from any form of harassment. The Board Policy Review Committee has reviewed the system's Equal Treatments for Students and Employees policy (02.09.140) and revised it to explicitly express the Board's disdain for negative treatment of any person in the Harford County Public Schools on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, language, age, socioeconomic status or disability. Mrs. Wolf complimented the Superintendent for including procedures which will be placed in the Administrative Procedures manual with the proposed policy to be acted upon by the Board. Acting on Mrs. Wolf's motion and the second of Mr. Hess, the Board unanimously approved the revised policy on Discrimination and Harassment.

APPROVAL OF TEST ADMINISTRATION AND DATA REPORTING POLICY

The Maryland State Board of Education has adopted regulations governing the administration of tests and reporting of data. Local school systems have been directed to develop and adopt a policy that governs the test administration and data reporting required by the State Board. State mandated tests are used to certify students for graduation, to identify strengths and weaknesses of schools and programs, to recognize and reward improving schools, and to identify schools that are not improving, as well as to drive school improvement efforts. To maintain the integrity of this assessment program, the State Board has adopted regulations governing test security, staff training, management of test materials, test administration, and the collection and reporting of data. The State Board holds local school systems and personnel accountable for compliance with these regulations and has defined violations and their possible consequences. To emphasize the importance of the testing program and to inform personnel of their responsibilities for the testing program, the Superintendent has directed that a Test Administration and Reporting Policy be developed which ensures conformity with state law and State Board testing regulations and identifies

those local teachers, administrators and others involved with the testing program as being personally responsible for the security of the documents. The policy says that violations of the regulations constitutes misconduct which may result in administrative disciplinary actions against employees involved. Board Member **Robert S. Magee** renewed his criticism of the policy's not making a distinction between willful negligence and mistakes. He said the issue of "intent" should be taken into consideration. Mr. Thomas said the determination would rest with the Superintendent who would investigate any cases where test security was violated. Mr. Hess said that wording needs to be in the Administrative Procedures on the testing program spelling out that training would be provided to those involved with test administration. Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Hess seconded that the policy be approved. The Board approved the motion, 5 to 2, with Mr. Magee and Mr. Galbreath dissenting.

APPROVAL OF PRIORITIES FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY REQUESTS TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE

During the Board of Education Business Meeting held on November 12, 2001, several citizens came forward during public comment to request the Board of Education approach the County Executive about using some of the \$14.5 million County surplus to install safety and security equipment in the schools. Later, during that meeting, Board members suggested that the Superintendent develop and present priorities for such a request. The Superintendent complied at the December 10, 2001 meeting, presenting suggestions for two priorities – modification of the public address system to include two-way classroom-to-office communication, and initiation of a system which would allow school office personnel to admit visitors to the school through a doorbell and remote release system involving an outdoor surveillance camera and monitor in the office. According to Director of Technology and Information Services **Andrew Moore** two-way classroom to office communications (including the ability for teachers to make phone calls outside the school system from their classrooms) would cost \$947,000 to implement county wide; while it would cost another \$464,018 to complete a door "striker" system that would permit the "buzzing in" of potential visitors from the school office at all 53 school buildings in the county. The total cost of the projects would be \$1.4 million. Mr. Galbreath said he is in support of the two-way communications but added he "has a problem" with spending money for the striker system. He said the installation of interior gates might be a better use of the funds. **Samuel S. Formulae IV**, Student Representative to the Board, agreed with Mr. Galbreath. Mr. Magee asked if the two proposals could be sought in priority order with two-way communications first and the striker system second – not as an all or nothing proposal. Mr. Thomas said the request represents the kind of "one time expenditures" which could be funded through a surplus without committing funding authorities for future allotments. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said the Board would be remiss if it did not make the request of the county. Mr. Thomas moved that funding for the two items – two-way communications and the striker system – be requested from the County government's surplus in that order. Mrs. Wolf seconded the motion. Mr. Magee reminded the Board that "there is only so much you can do if someone is bent on evil, they can do it." The Board voted 6 to 1 to support the motion (Mr. Galbreath dissenting).

CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR INDOOR TRACK AS A RECOGNIZED SPORT

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) recognizes Indoor Track as one of its 17 official sports for interscholastic competition in Maryland. In March, 2001, a proposal was brought before the Harford County Public School Athletic Committee to add Indoor Track to the interscholastic sports offered by the county. The proposal was approved overwhelmingly and received support from the General Curriculum Committee. In May 2001, the Superintendent put the proposal on hold pending budgetary questions. The proposal to fund the program was presented to the Board at its December 10, 2001 meeting. The Superintendent added for the January 14, 2002 meeting a recommendation that the Board NOT add Indoor Track at this time because of funding limitations. Mr. Galbreath said Indoor Track is a sport which allows an individual to improve his or her performance. Mrs. Wolf agreed and asked that, if the sport is not approved this year, the request return to the Board for reconsideration next year. Mr. Thomas said the Athletic Directors have approached the Board with a stated need for athletic trainers and, three years ago, a proposal for pay-to-play had received serious consideration by the Board. Mr. Hess said the request is coming to the Board “out of place” and would be better suited as an item early on in the budget process. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Mr. Hess, the Board voted unanimously NOT to support the addition of Indoor Track to the system’s interscholastic program at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

REPORT ON HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENT TESTING

Mrs. Haas introduced Director of Secondary Education **William Ekey** who told the Board that \$65,000 is available from the Transportation Department’s fuel surplus to pay for the busing of non-seniors and non-tested tenth and eleventh graders (ninth graders will be tested in the High School Assessments) during a week in the later part of May. The money would be used to bring the non-tested students to school late on each of those days, eliminating conflict with teachers and others monitoring the testing program. Mr. Ekey said that a modification in the 2002-03 calendar approved by the Board December 17th could eliminate the need for the \$65,000 next year. He said moving the graduation dates to the first week of June 2003 – which would bring them in compliance with Board policy – from the previously approved last week of May would mean there would not be a conflict in the testing dates. Mr. Thomas said he found it “troubling” that the issue of the possible need for the funds in the 2002-03 school year would come to the Board after the budget approval process was well underway. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted to approve the use of the \$65,000 to transport non-tested students this school year, and to defer consideration of the 2002-03 calendar issue to its January 28th meeting.

ROLE OF GENERAL CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Mrs. Haas told the Board that the Maryland Annotated Code requires local Boards of Education approve curriculum guides and courses of study. She said that, by practice, the Harford Board of Education has historically designated this responsibility to the General Curriculum Committee, though nothing can be found in Board action or policy to indicate any official action had ever been taken to do so. Mrs. Haas asked the Board if it still wanted to operate in that manner, noting that the GCC meets for two-half day meetings each month. Mr. Galbreath suggested an alternative may be to have a Board member as a representative on the GCC. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the Board of Education is a “lay body” charged with enacting policy and that it is scheduled to meet 19 times during the 31 days in January. Mrs. Wolf noted that the Board does not have a representative on GCC and the setting and delivering of curriculum is the major job of a school system. Mr. Magee said the process of the Board’s deferring this responsibility to GCC has worked very well and the lay Board has demonstrated it can “talk to death” proposals. He said the Board has demonstrated its confidence in the professional staff in setting curriculum, adding that major changes have been brought to the Board for action or information.

Mrs. Haas noted that, on February 4th, the Technical Advisory Committee on Balancing Enrollment will bring forth a number of proposals to the Board in addressing the issues of overcrowding at Forest Hill Elementary, Southampton Middle School, and C. Milton Wright High School. (That meeting has subsequently been set for the C. Milton Wright High School auditorium, 7:00 p.m.)

The Superintendent asked Assistant Superintendent for Business Services **John Markowski** to report on the progress of the MGT Performance Assessment study. Mr. Markowski said teams were being established under the leadership of senior staff members to review the recommendations of the MGT study with a target date of March 18, 2002 for those recommendations to be delivered to the Board. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said he wanted to dispel any “rumors” that may be circulating that the Board “does not like” the MGT report. He said, to the contrary, the Board found the report to be thought provoking and far reaching and is anxious to move forward with recommendations that may be coming from the Superintendent’s review committees if they are practical and bear promise of making the school operation more economic and efficient. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the media had picked up on the promise of “\$25 million in savings” indicated by the MGT report. He emphasized that \$16 to \$18 million of that savings would come if the employee health benefits program were to be significantly changed. Mr. Magee said he hopes that the public will read the entire MGT report (which appears on the HCPS web site) before drawing any conclusions. He added that the strength of the Harford County Public School System is more than “just numbers.”

DISCUSSION

OPPORTUNITY FOR BOARD MEMBERS TO PRESENT NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Mr. Thomas said he had heard “nothing but good things” from elected officials and others

about the performance of Government Liaison **Kathy Carmel** who was hired last fall by the school system to monitor local, state and national legislation impacting the local school system and to assist lawmakers in their understanding of the school system.

ADJOURNMENT

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler declared the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue to hold its regular business meetings at Magnolia Middle School through February and March with those meetings scheduled for February 11 (7:00 p.m.) and February 25 (6:30 p.m.); March 11 (7:00 p.m.) and March 25 (6:30 p.m.). In addition, the report of the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee on Balancing Enrollments will take place at C. Milton Wright High School (7:00 p.m., auditorium). (Consult the HCPS web site for a complete listing of business meetings, work sessions, and minutes from previous work sessions as well as B-Line summations of Board business meetings.)

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@heps.k12.md.us; Or call the HCPS Customer Relations Action Line (24-hours-a-day) at 410-638-0022.

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