



Board Meeting

March 25, 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

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County was called to order on Monday, March 25, 2002, by Board President **Eugene C. Chandler** at 6:35 p.m. in the multipurpose room of Magnolia Middle School. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler directed that a quorum call be conducted, resulting in all Board Members and the Student Representative to the Board reporting as present. Board Vice President **Terry R. Troy** moved and Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** seconded that the agenda be adopted as printed. The motion was unanimously supported by the Board. Mr. Thomas led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

Student Representative to the Board **Samuel S. Fromille IV** introduced the two retired Harford County Public School educators who were to be inducted into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame that evening. Mr. Fromille introduced **George W. Brown, Jr.**, a former Social Studies/English teacher who taught for 31 ½ years – 22 of those years in Harford County at Churchville Elementary and Southampton Middle schools. Mr. Brown came to Harford in 1973 and retired in 1995. He taught sixth grade at both Churchville and Southampton, making the move to Southampton when the sixth grade was shifted to middle school in 1980. Mr. Brown was known as a stickler for proper speech and grammar, driving

his students to be the best they could be as writers and orators. In 1988, Mr. Brown was chosen to be the pronouncer for the annual middle school spelling bee, a service he continues to perform seven years after his retirement. Mr. Brown said he was “thrilled beyond words” in accepting a plaque, certificate, and laminated copy of the article describing his contributions which appeared in the March edition of *Harford Schools* newspaper. Mr. Fromille next introduced **Christine P. Tolbert**, a 29-year teacher at Havre de Grace Consolidated School, Hall’s Cross Roads, and Oakington elementary schools, a counselor at Aberdeen High School, and, finally, a supervisor of elementary schools.

Mrs. Tolbert, who was one of the eight African-American teachers chosen to integrate the formerly all-white teaching corps in the historically white schools of Harford County in 1964, distinguished herself as a builder of bridges during the period of total integration in the Harford County Public Schools. She has continued her contributions to education in the county following her retirement in 1987 as the executive director and driving force behind the restoration of the former Hosanna Freedmen’s School in her native Darlington area. She is also co-writing a book about the community of Berkley near her childhood home. She was presented with a plaque, certificate, and laminated copy of the article detailing her contributions.

Both Mr. Brown’s and Mrs. Tolbert’s portraits are hanging on a wall in the Board Room at the school system’s central office in Bel Air along with the other Hall of Fame educators inducted by the Board over the past two years.

The Board also honored **Richard C. “Dick” Slutzky** who was inducted last fall into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame on the campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Mr. Slutzky, a 30-year teacher and coach for 25 of those years at Aberdeen High School, coached his teams to an overall 288 win, 42 loss, and one tie record in dual meets during that time, winning 18 county championships, nine region titles, and three consecutive state championships. Mr. Slutzky is also a member of the Maryland State Wrestling Hall of Fame, the Johnny Earacson Award winner, and a two-time *Sunpaper* Maryland coach of the year as well as a many times *Aegis* coach of the year. He was captain of his Syracuse University wrestling team where he finished second in the national collegiate tournament as a 157-pounder as a senior and was named both his school’s athlete of the year and scholar athlete of the year. Mr. Slutzky was presented with a Board certificate by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas**.

OLD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

The Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Consent Agenda including minutes from the January 3 and February 4, 2002 work sessions as well as the February 11 and 25, 2002 business meetings; the monthly report on personnel listing those who had left the

school system, been placed on leaves of absence; who were newly employed during the month of February 2002; a Proposed Resolution on the Week of the Young Child; the award of a contract for school furniture; and the award of a contract for school milk and cottage cheese purchase.

APPROVAL OF SPECIFIED COMPONENTS OF BALANCING ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Following Board passage of a Balancing Enrollment with Capacity policy in October, 2001, the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee on Balancing Enrollment, as set forth by the policy, had identified three schools in which enrollment and capacity are misaligned and whose projected enrollments show an increasing imbalance. The three schools – Forest Hill Elementary, Southampton Middle School, and C. Milton Wright High School – were identified by the committee as presenting situations where the educational program of students and staff is compromised by the over-enrollment. The committee presented a report to the Board in December, 2001 identifying those schools and offering a number of options which could be used to address the situation. On February 4, 2002, the committee presented a series of specific recommendations to the Board during a work session. The 15 recommendations involved the canceling of all incoming boundary exceptions to those schools, the implementation of interim steps to the physical plants of Southampton and C. Milton Wright to ease the overcrowding in the short term, the use of portable buildings at those and other schools in the area to absorb the over-enrollment, and the relocation of students from the schools to other nearby schools. The committee and the Board held several public hearings and work sessions on the proposals and accepted written comment from members of the public during the months leading up to the March 25, 2002 meeting during which the Superintendent presented the Board with the 15 recommendations for their consideration.

In a series of motions, the Board approved the following recommendations:

- Motion by Board Member **Thomas D. Hess** and second by Board Member **Robert S. Magee** to relocate approximately 79 students in the southwest section of the Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area to Forest Lakes Elementary School next year. The motion provides the option for parents of current fourth graders (next year's fifth graders) to seek a boundary exception (grandfathering at parent's transportation expense) for those students to remain at Forest Hill Elementary School. The motion was approved 7 to 0.
- Motion by Mr. Hess and second by Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** to relocate 65 students in the southeast section of the Forest Hill Elementary attendance area next year, not including Spenceola, to Forest Lakes Elementary School (with the grandfathering of rising fifth graders at parents transportation expense), requiring two relocatables to be put in place a Forest Lakes Elementary School, was passed 6 to 1 with Mr. Thomas dissenting.
- A motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mrs. Wolf to reject proposal number 3 involving the movement of High Point Estates elementary students from Forest Hill to North Bend elementary schools was defeated by a 5 to 2 vote with Mr. Thomas and Mrs.

Wolf voting for the motion. A motion by Mr. Hess and seconded by Mrs. Troy to accept the proposal that would move ten students (with the grandfathering of rising fifth graders at parents transportation) next year was approved 5 to 2, with Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Wolf dissenting.

- Mr. Hess moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that 50 students in the northwest section of Forest Hill Elementary School be moved to North Harford Elementary School, with rising fifth graders having the opportunity to be grandfathered at parents expense next year. The Board voted 7 to 0 to support the motion.
- Motion by Mr. Hess and second by Mrs. Wolf to relocate 28 students next year who live in the southeast corner of the Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area next year from Southampton Middle School to Fallston Middle School (with rising eighth graders being eligible for boundary exception grandfathering at parent's expense). These students currently attend Fallston High School. The motion passed 7 to 0.
- Motion by Mr. Hess and seconded by Mr. Magee that 82 students in the southwest corner of the Hickory Elementary School attendance area be moved next year from Southampton to Fallston middle schools (with rising eighth graders eligible for boundary exception grandfather- at parent's expense). These students now attend Fallston High School. The motion passed 6 to 1 with Mr. Thomas dissenting.
- Motion by Mr. Hess and seconded by Mrs. Troy to relocate 11 students who live in High Point Estates from Southampton to North Harford middle schools next year (with rising eighth graders eligible for boundary exception next year). These students currently attend C. Milton Wright High School. The motion passed 7 to 0.
- Motion by Mr. Magee and seconded by Mrs. Troy to move 36 Southampton Middle School students living in the northwest section of the Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area to North Harford Middle School (with rising eighth graders eligible for boundary exception grandfathering next year). The motion passed 7 to 0.
- Motion by Board Past President **David H. Galbreath** and seconded by Mrs. Wolf to relocate 33 Southampton Middle School students next year who live in the southern portion of the Dublin Elementary School attendance area to North Harford Middle School (with rising eighth graders eligible for boundary exception grandfathering next year). These students currently attend C. Milton Wright High School. The motion was passed 7 to 0.
- Motion by Mrs. Troy and seconded by Mr. Hess to relocate 99 students in the Bel Air Elementary School attendance area who currently attend Southampton Middle School and Bel Air High School to Bel Air Middle School next year (with rising eighth graders eligible for boundary exception next year). The motion passed 7 to 0.
- Mr. Hess moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that it is the intent of this Board that 240 Southampton Middle School students who live in the remaining Forest Hill Elementary School district north of Rt. 23 move to North Harford Middle school in the 2004-05 school

year with the situation to be revisited by the Board during the school year preceding the proposed move. The Board approved the motion 6 to 1 with Mr. Thomas dissenting.

- Mr. Hess moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that six current ninth grade C. Milton Wright students living in the High Point Estates area be moved next year to North Harford Middle School, with three subsequent year's ninth graders being moved to phase in the change. The Board approved the motion 7 to 0.

- Motion by Mr. Hess and seconded by Mrs. Troy to relocate 17 C. Milton Wright High School ninth grade students who live in the northwest section of the Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area to North Harford High School next year. Subsequent ninth grade classes would be moved over the following three years to phase in the total move. The Board approved the motion 7 to 0.

- Motion by Mr. Galbreath and seconded by Mrs. Troy to relocate 32 C. Milton Wright High School ninth grade students who live in the southern portion of the Dublin Elementary School attendance area next year to North Harford High School with the three subsequent year ninth graders being moved to complete the phase in change. The Board voted 7 to 0 to accept the motion.

- Mr. Hess moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that it is the intent of this Board that, in the 2005-06 school year, 65 ninth grade C. Milton Wright High School students who live in the remaining portions of the Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area north of Rt. 23 would be relocated to North Harford High School subsequent to a review by the Board during the school year prior to the proposed move. The motion was approved by the Board 6 to 1 with Mr. Thomas dissenting.

Mr. Thomas asked the Board to reconsider its previous action involving the movement of elementary students in High Point Estates from Forest Hill to North Bend elementary schools. Noting the residents of the area had expressed their willingness to have children moved from Southampton and C. Milton Wright schools to the North Harford middle and high schools, he said, under Roberts Rules, the change had to be made in the same meeting and had to be proposed by a Board member who had voted for the previous action. Mrs. Troy moved for reconsideration, but the initiative died for lack of a second.

Mr. Hess said a date by which grandfathering requests must be submitted needs to be established and called on the school administration to help parents through the process. He noted parents need only to get their children to the nearest bus stop of the school to which their children are being grandfathered. He said he realizes there will be some time where the changes may cause splits in siblings who will attend different secondary schools and asked that staff be "sensitive" to those issues.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said he endorsed Mr. Hess' concerns and would follow up to make sure they are addressed.

Mrs. Wolf thanked the Superintendent, staff, and Technical Advisory Committee for the

“complete picture” that had been given the Board. She noted that state school construction guidelines required the Board to act on possible moves of students to be made in 2004 and 2005. She said, while the solution enacted by the Board was “not perfect” the process set up by the balancing enrollment policy had worked. She said she feared the actions taken to lessen overcrowding conditions at one school might overcrowd another.

Joseph P. Licata, assistant superintendent for operations and chair of the Technical Advisory Committee, said that “risks” had to be taken because the availability of funds for school construction from the state over the next several years is up in the air.

Mr. Thomas said he wanted to thank the Superintendent and those of her staff members who had worked on the balancing enrollment proposals and his fellow Board members for their “patience” with the process. He said he is not happy with the redistricting and that it is not a long term solution. Mr. Thomas added it was the third time in the seven years he had been on the Board that a redistricting plan had been adopted, citing Abingdon and Meadowvale elementary schools. He said the previous Saturday morning, he had been “counseled” by former Southampton Middle School Principal **Tom Wimbrow** about conditions which had existed at the school for many years, including having 2,106 students in two grades – 48 per class – in 1976, during which 15 of the 18 math teachers were “floaters” and it took the staff four hours to feed students, most of whom ate in their rooms. Mr. Thomas said that, until there are “two or three more schools” built in the county, similar redistricting will have to be undertaken. He cited the proposed building of 101 houses on the property of the old Fallston General Hospital which will create more than 30 additional students for schools in the area. He said there will be a need to “constantly redefine school boundaries” given the growing population. Mr. Thomas pointed to the call by some parents for countywide redistricting, but said **Maurice Kalin**, the consultant brought in to study Harford’s situation more than a year ago, had said there was no need for countywide redistricting. “We are all stakeholders, we need to come together to find a way that is in the longterm best interest of the system,” he said. He added that developers will have to be part of the solution.

Mr. Fromille said lessons have been learned by the balancing enrollment process and that there may be a need to reevaluate the process to find a way to gather public input at an earlier date. He suggested a look at the Board’s balancing enrollment policy with an eye to reorganizing the committee or adjusting the timeline.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said he appreciated the work of the Superintendent, her staff, and the Board.

APPROVAL OF POLICY ON STUDENT PARKING AND STUDENT LOCKERS

Susan Cook, President of Bel Air High School PTSA suggested a reasonable school locker policy be instituted directing locker responsibility be that of school personnel and not students. Assistant Superintendent for Education Services **Bernard F. Barnes** presented the Board with proposed Board policies on Student Parking Privileges and Student Lockers. Both policies had been before the Board at its February 25, 2002 meeting, he said. He said the Board’s Comprehensive Safety and Security Plan, adopted last June, calls for the

establishment of a locker use policy and campus parking policy. Dr. Barnes added that the Board's Policy Review Committee has proposed a locker use policy that directs each school where lockers are available to develop procedures which address such issues as purpose, parameters for locker assignments, rules for student use and locker upkeep, as well as noting the right of school personnel to search a locker. The proposed policy on student parking directs each high school to adopt a set of regulations that set reasonable limits concerning eligibility and student use, and notice to students of applicable search and seizure laws. Authority to oversee parking assignments would be vested with the principal or his/her designee. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Mr. Thomas, the Board voted 5 to 1 (Mr. Magee dissenting) that there be a uniform charge for parking privileges through all nine of the county's public high schools. The Board directed that the proposed policies be held over for another 30 days to provide for public review of the initiatives and that they be made available for public perusal on the school system's web site.

PRESENTATIONS

POLICY ON DRESS CODE AND BACKPACK USE POLICY – FIRST READING

Stephen Lentowski, director of student services for the school system, presented the Board with a first reading of proposed Board policies on dress code and backpack use. He pointed to the passage by the Board of the Comprehensive Safety and Security Plan and its reference to a need for student dress and backpack policies to encourage safety. He said the intention of both policies is to seek compliance from students and to avoid disciplinary action unless there are repeated offenses or serious aggravating circumstances. The backpack policy calls for the storage of backpacks, duffel bags, briefcases, or other similar devices used by students to carry books in lockers or other designated areas. The policy also points out that it is the responsibility of students to cooperate fully with any lawful investigation of items in those carriers by authorized personnel on school property. Mr. Fromille said students are opposed to the policy, pointing out that it would unreasonably restrict their ability to carry books from one class to another. He said that lockers are unavailable to students for most of the school day because of the size of schools and the short period of time between classes. Mrs. Troy suggested the proposed policies be reviewed by the Safety and Security committee. The Board directed that the proposed policies be held in abeyance for 30 days and that they be available for public review on the school system web site.

REAFFIRMATION OF SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SECTIONS OF POLICY MANUAL

Dr. Barnes told the Board that its procedures call for the reaffirmation of all of its policies on a five-year cycle. He said that the first two sections to be reaffirmed are the Superintendent of Schools and School Administration sections of the policy manual. Dr. Barnes reviewed several proposed "housekeeping" changes in those sections of the manual and said the sections would come back to the Board in 30 days for their approval.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Haas said the current school calendar calls for schools to end for students on Thursday, June 13, 2002. However, she noted the calendar contains four inclement weather days and that none of those days has been used to this point. She said, while no official change can be made in the calendar pending the possible need to use one or more of those days for an unforeseen closing, if no days are used, students would end their school year on Friday, June 7, and that teachers would have their four in-service (staff development) days from Monday, June 10 through Thursday, June 13, 2002.

Mrs. Haas said that the U.S. Department of Education has released a letter saying that, if a school system does not use Title I funds in a particular grade level, it is not required to have students at that level take statewide tests. She said, since Harford's eighth graders do not use Title I funds, she is recommending that the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) tests not be given at that level, even though some counties – Charles and Howard in particular – are opting to go ahead with the eighth grade MSPAP even though they don't use Title I money at that level. Mrs. Haas said the role of assessment remains a guiding principal in teaching and that each middle school principal is being asked to provide a plan for assessing eighth grade student performance to be used by School Improvement Teams. She said there remains an expectation that third and fifth grade students will take seriously the administration of their MSPAP exams this year. Mrs. Haas said letters will be sent to parents urging them to influence their third and fifth grade children to “give it their best shot” on the tests. “The standards movement is not going away,” Mrs. Haas said, despite the controversy over the MSPAP test's validity. But, Mrs. Haas said, because of the “on-again-off-again” nature of the last several months relating to MSPAP, she is recommending that Harford not administer the eighth grade exams this year. Mr. Galbreath moved and Mrs. Wolf, Mrs. Troy, Mr. Hess, and Mr. Magee seconded that the eighth grade MSPAP test not be given, but that the third and fifth grade MSPAP exams go forward this spring. The Board voted 6 to 0 to support the motion (Mr. Thomas had left prior to the vote due to illness). Mr. Fromille cast a dissenting preferential vote.

BOARD COMMENTS

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said that he would run for a position on the Board of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education and that any interested Board member should submit his or her name by May 6th. He thanked the administration and staff of Magnolia Middle School for doing such a great job hosting the Board for its three month quarterly meetings from January through March.

Mr. Hess said the redistricting issue had not been an easy one for any of the Board members and, the fact that not all of them had spoken about their feelings on the matter as Mr. Thomas had, should not be interpreted as any less angst on the part of each Board member over the process. “It was not easy, but the difficult calls had to be made for the long term good of the school system,” Mr. Hess said.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of Mr. Galbreath and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board voted

unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will now shift its public meetings to Aberdeen Middle School where it will meet for each of its business meetings during the April, May, and June quarter in the cafeteria of that building. The Board's first April business meeting will be held on April 15 beginning at 7:00 p.m. with the second to be held on April 22, beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Board will hold a public work session in early April to review the 2002-03 school operating budget following actions taken by the County Executive in his April 1st release of the county budget. In addition, there is a scheduled work session to be held April 29, 7:00 p.m., at the HEAT Center, with the topic of the meeting to be determined. Consult the school system web site for a complete listing of Board meetings as well as an agenda of upcoming 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@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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