



45 East Gordon Street / Bel Air, Maryland 21014

Robert S. Magee, *President*
Robert B. Thomas, Jr., *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Ruth R. Rich
Terry R. Troy
Karen L. Wolf
Mark M. Wolkow

Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

Michael D. Morey
Student Representative

Board Meeting
October 27, 2003

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 at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 27, 2003, in the multi-purpose room of Magnolia Middle School. Mr. Magee asked for a quorum call of Board Members which showed that Board Vice President **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** and Student Representative to the Board **Michael M. Morey** were not present. Both arrived several minutes late due to other commitments. Acting on the motion of **Terry R. Troy** and the second of **Eugene C. Chandler**, the Board voted unanimously to accept the agenda as printed. Mrs. Troy led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

HCPS EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME – A. DONALD FASSETT/CAROL L. BARKER

Beginning in October, 2000, the Board of Education has been inducting into the Harford County Public School Educator Hall of Fame each month during the school year two former school system educators who compiled at least 20 years of exemplary service in the Harford Public Schools. Those inducted are nominated by the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association (HCRSPA) and are featured in that month's edition of *Harford Schools*, the school system's newspaper. Their portraits are put on display on a wall of the Board Room at the school system's central office in Bel Air. For October, 2003, the two nominees inducted into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame were **A. Donald Fassett** and **Carol L. Barker**.

Mrs. Troy introduced the two nominees who were present with families, former colleagues, and friends. Mr. Magee and Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** presented each with a plaque, a Board certificate, and a laminated copy of the article describing their outstanding contributions. Also, County Council Member **Richard Slutzky** presented each with a proclamation from the County Council and County Executive.

Mr. Fassett began his teaching career in Harford County as a biology teacher at North Harford High School in 1954. After three

years, he convinced the school's administration to allow him to begin a program of special education before the term was coined to help those who were having trouble learning to read. Mr. Fassett became a pioneer in the education for students with disabilities, working 28 additional years at North Harford and Bel Air high schools providing patient, loving, and effective education services for those students. In addition, Mr. Fassett coached many sports at North Harford and Bel Air, becoming known as a stickler for fundamentals and an unwavering supporter of the schools' sports programs as well as other activities there. He met and married Bel Air High psychology teacher/coach Connie Whaley. Mrs. Fassett was inducted into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame last year.

Ms. Barker was an outstanding student-athlete at Edgewood High School who chose to become a teacher though she maintained her second ambition, to become a youth minister, through her 31 years as a sixth grade, physical education, and social studies teacher at two elementary schools, and Edgewood and Bel Air high schools. Ms. Barker was known as an advocate for young people, becoming involved not only in their academic but their spiritual growth, supporting all the activities at the schools in which she taught. A fiery coach, she used the athletic fields and courts as yet another way to reach young people. She continued her work at Mountain Christian Church while teaching and, since her retirement in 1995, has organized a program of sports and adventure for youth and adults at the church.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

C. Milton Wright High School French teachers **Marcy Deguffory** and **Lucy Wise-Gladwell**, along with CMW senior **Patrick Fox** appeared before the Board to urge that their proposed trip to the largely French-speaking cities of Quebec and Montreal, Canada be permitted to occur. The trio explained that the annual trip intended to immerse students in an area relatively close to home has taken place for many years. They explained that, following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, an initial denial of the 2002 trip had been determined by the school system's central office, followed by a review and approval with stipulations. A similar situation

developed for last year's trip. The 2004 trip has been denied by the school system's Safety and Security office, the three said, adding that they were "dismayed" over the "inconsistency" of the application of field trip approvals. The teachers said they had spoken with Mrs. Haas earlier in the day, saying they would appear before the Board that night asking its support for allowing the trip to occur. Mr. Morey, a senior at C. Milton Wright High, said his older sister had helped plan the first trip several years ago.

ACTION ITEMS CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Member Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Consent Agenda including the Monthly Report on Personnel, showing those who had left the system, been placed on leaves of absence, or were newly appointed between September 1 and September 30, 2003; Minutes of the Board Work Session and Business Meeting on September 8, 2003; Proposed Resolutions on American Education Week ("Great Public Schools for Every Child – America's Promise" – November 16 through 22, 2003), Impact Area Aid Assistance, National Family Week (November 23 through 29, 2003), National Educational Support Personnel Day (November 19, 2003); and Ratification of the Negotiated Agreement with the Harford County Educational Services Council (HCESC).

APPROVAL OF BOARD POLICY MANUAL, DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT (GENERAL ADMINISTRATION 02.09.140)

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the seconds of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and Board Member **Ruth R. "Robin" Rich**, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed revisions to the Harassment and Discrimination policy, 02.09.140, which adds "sexual orientation" to the list of forms of discrimination against students banned by Board policy. The action was taken as a result of the Maryland State Department of Education's changing of the state's education bylaws to include the "sexual orientation" entry in its specifically noted anti-discrimination statute. The proposed policy, which had been received by the Board last month and held over for 30 days of public comment, now reads, in part, "Harassment means verbal or physical conduct on the basis of race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability."

APPROVAL OF AWARD OF CONTRACT – CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES, NEW MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL AT PATTERSON MILL

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, Mrs. Rich, and Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the awarding of a contract for construction management of the new middle/high school planned for Patterson Mill Road near Bel Air to the J. Vinton Schafer and Sons firm in the amount of \$1,696,000. Cost estimates for reimbursables total \$213,360 and will be billed at cost. **Kathleen Sanner**, supervisor of planning and construction for the school system, told the Board the award of the construction management contract is "the next step in the process" for the project that would see a 1,600 student school constructed on the property south of Bel Air off Rt. 924. She said the firm will provide pre-construction services including value engineering and constructability review, project bidding, and construction management for a two year construction project. Mrs. Sanner said 12 firms expressed interest in the management assignment with

three of the applicants being chosen for interviews. She said the Schafer firm emerged as the top-ranked company, noting the Abingdon-based firm had recently completed management of the Meadowvale Elementary School modernization/addition project and construction of the Forest Hill Elementary School. They are currently managing the phased addition/modernization project at North Harford High School, she said. Mrs. Sanner added that a different field staff would be assigned by the company from the one which will continue its work at North Harford High for the next three years.

APPROVAL OF POLICY ON STAFF TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Mrs. Rich, the Board voted 6 to 1 (Mrs. Wolf dissenting) to approve a policy that prohibits school system employees – other than Pupil Personnel Workers or Principals/Assistant Principals — from transporting students in their personal or school system-owned cars. The policy further stipulates that the approved administrators would not transport students "unless there is a risk of harm to the student's health or safety in the event such transportation is not provided." Board Counsel **Patrick P. Spicer** told the Board that administrators transporting students would have liability insurance coverage both from their private provider as well as the Board's carrier (the Maryland Association of Boards of Education – MABE – pool). Mrs. Haas noted that principals and assistant principals have been providing the service in emergencies for many years but need to have the support that would be offered by a Board policy on the issue. Mr. Magee, a former assistant principal and principal in the system, said the policy provides the support that such transportation in emergencies is part of the designated administrators' job and they are covered by liability insurance. Mr. Thomas said, without such a policy, the designated administrators are at risk if they transport students. Mrs. Wolf said, since PPWs have school system cars assigned to them, they should be the ones to transport students and the policy should stipulate that principals/assistant principals would transport students only when PPWs are not available.

NEW BUSINESS ACTIONS

AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2003

Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the seconds of Mrs. Wolf, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, and Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to accept the report of the Wooden and Benson CPA firm which audited Harford County Public School System accounts for the year ended June 30, 2003. Representatives of the auditing firm told the Board that their review had resulted in a "clean opinion" of school records showing no "material weaknesses" in the system's financial operation. Mr. Thomas noted that the \$757,000 ending fund balance for a \$260.8 million budget represented less than 1/2 of one percent, and commended school system Chief Financial Officer **John M. Markowski** and his staff for their "outstanding efforts" in making sure school funds are applied to the areas where they can best be used for student achievement.

PRESENTATIONS

ANNUAL REVIEW OF BALANCING ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITIES POLICY

Assistant Superintendent for Operations **Joseph P. Licata** appeared before the Board to lead a discussion on the Board's Policy on Balancing Enrollment and Capacities, adopted in October

PROPOSED POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR STAFF VEHICLES

of 2001. Superintendent Haas said confusion exists as to whether it was the Board's intent to review that policy annually or review it after the first year of its operation, which was done in October 2002. Board members expressed varying opinions on the intent with Mr. Thomas, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, **Mark M. Wolkow**, Mrs. Rich and Mr. Magee saying they were "comfortable" with the policy being reviewed on the traditional five year cycle. However, Mrs. Wolf and Mrs. Troy said they felt the annual review would keep the policy current and allow for public review. Mr. Licata said if the Board does decide it wants to review the policy, a preferred time frame would be in the May/June vicinity to allow for the implementation of any changes prior to the triggering of the enrollment/capacities review conducted annually beginning in October by the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Superintendent recommended that no changes be made in the policy.

Mr. Licata provided a report on the Technical Advisory Committee's preliminary findings for the 2003-04 school year. He said there had been a slight downturn in school enrollment this year (40,192 – 72 less than last school year's official enrollment and 296 below the projected Sept. 30, 2003 enrollment). He said that much of the downturn can be traced to the change in the month by which a student must turn five to be eligible to go to kindergarten (from December 31 to November 30 this year in a phased-in process that will eventually have September 1 as the cutoff point). Mr. Licata said the TAC had identified Havre de Grace area elementary schools; Fountain Green, Prospect Mill, Hickory, Forest Hill and Forest Lakes elementaries; Deerfield Elementary; Bel Air Middle; Edgewood Middle; Fallston Middle; Southampton and North Harford middles; Aberdeen High School; Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, Edgewood and Fallston high schools; as well as the eight schools involved in the second phase of the four-year move toward full-day kindergarten as schools that need to be considered in balancing enrollment scenarios.

The recommendations of the TAC will be reviewed in more detail by the Board at its November 17 work session to be held at Southampton Middle School (7:00 p.m.).

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT REVIEW

The Board was presented with the September 30, 2003 enrollment figures, comparing each school and the school system with the state-rated capacity numbers. The report shows Deerfield, Fountain Green, Prospect Mill, Hickory, Forest Hill, and Forest Lakes elementary schools will reach or exceed their capacities and will require some relief. It also shows that the Havre de Grace region will experience future growth due to residential construction. It further demonstrates that middle and high schools in the Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, Edgewood, and Fallston attendance areas will experience growth and will require relief. Aberdeen may experience residential growth, thus requiring additional capacity in the high school attendance area. And, attendance areas for North Harford High and the proposed new middle/high school in Bel Air will need to be developed. Further, the impact of full-day kindergarten programs will require consideration. The report showed that the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee recommends placement of relocatable classrooms, fluid placement of students, continuation of boundary exception management, interim facilities improvements, construction of new schools, relocation of programs, and adjustments to school attendance area boundaries as potential remedies for the enrollment/capacity problems faced by the schools listed.

Mr. Licata presented the Board with the first reading of a proposed policy for the assignment of staff vehicles. Mrs. Haas said, seven years ago, the number of automobiles assigned to staff was "much larger" than the current 23 in use by various school administrators. Mr. Licata said the Board does not currently have a policy or procedures for the assignment of staff vehicles. He said the 2001 MGT of America performance review recommended the Board develop a policy and procedures for staff vehicles. In general, the proposed policy would limit the assignment of vehicles to senior staff members, administrative staff in Transportation and Facilities Management departments, Safety and Security Staff, the Director of Public Information, and Pupil Personnel Workers. The policy notes the need for those employees who are "on-call" 24-hours-per-day, seven-days-a-week to have access to school system vehicles. All others who are involved in bona fide school system business would be provided with a travel reimbursement for the use of personal vehicles. The proposed policy will be placed on the school system web site (www.hcps.org) to provide for public input for a period of at least 30 days.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to endorse positions it had previously taken involving legislation likely to come before the Maryland General Assembly in its 2004 session. The Board reasserted its "strong opposition" to providing State aid to private schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Haas introduced contingents from Magnolia and Hall's Cross Roads Elementary Schools which provided information about efforts being made at each school to move the schools off the Title I School Choice list. Both schools have large percentages of students receiving free and reduced priced meals (the federal government's method of determining poverty for purposes of providing funding through the Title I program). Principal **Barbara Douglas** and Assistant Principal **Mark Etzel** of Magnolia Elementary; and Principal **Carol Hepler** and Assistant Principal **Peter Carpenter** discussed the partnerships each is creating in helping students achieve.

DISCUSSION

BOARD MEMBERS NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Wolf mentioned two recent news articles she has read. The first discussed a Carroll County high school principal (**Gary Dunkleberger** of North Carroll High) who has an automated list of parents' e-mail addresses which he used to provide information quickly during a recent school crisis. The second discussed four regional meetings to be held by State Superintendent **Nancy Grasmick** which will permit parents to go on line in expressing their views.

Student Representative Morey thanked those who were quoted in a newspaper feature written about him the week before.

Mr. Wolkow provided encouragement to the Maryland General Assembly to pass enabling legislation that would allow the local government to raise additional funds and said the area he serves – Edgewood/Abingdon – stands to gain some capital projects if the Harford Delegation focuses on supporting the needed legislation.

Mr. Magee recommended the school system and Board address the issue of alternative education as soon as possible. He recom-

mended that a task force be appointed to look at a “true” alternative education program that would include a day option and be open to more students than those who are long term suspended or expelled as is the case with the current night program offered by the Harford County Public Schools. Mrs. Troy moved and Mrs. Wolf seconded that such a task force be appointed and the group give its report by the April/May 2004 time frame. During the discussion that ensued, Mrs. Wolf and Mr. Magee talked about previous studies that had been done on alternative education with the suggestion made that the task force should look at those suggestions rather than beginning anew. Mrs. Rich suggested there be a Board liaison and a parent representative but that the number on the task force be kept relatively small. Mr. Wolkow asked if an April/May report would make it possible for a program to be instituted at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. Mrs. Haas said suggestions that would necessitate funding would have to come before the budget cycle. She said cost analysis could come quickly looking at former models. More recently, “virtual schools” with on-line courses using current technology have made it possible to offer more courses at less expense. Mrs. Haas said the facility is another matter, adding, if the Aberdeen High School North Building (which will become available when the replacement school opens in time for next school year) is an older building that needs extensive work. Mr. Thomas said he supports the premise of an alternative education program but urged caution in implementation. He said sending a proposal to a task force sometimes proves its death knell unless the group is provided with a specific charge outlining a level of expectations and a time frame. “This is like climbing Mt. Everest,” he said of the alternative education proposal, adding that he supports using the Aberdeen site. Mrs. Haas said she would have the historical data pulled to be used with this year’s budget deliberations. Mr. Magee said it’s important that “this be done right” and the discussion be brought back at a November Board meeting. He added, if the school system is serious that ‘no child be left behind,’ a more comprehensive alternative education program must be instituted. He noted that every previous year when an alternative education program has been proposed it ends up being cut out of the budget. The Board voted unanimously to support the motion to set up the task force.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue its business meetings at Magnolia Middle School through the December quarter. A work session to discuss balancing enrollment proposals will be held on November 17 at Southampton Middle School (7:00 p.m.). November business meetings are scheduled for November 10 (7:00 p.m.) and November 24 (6:30 p.m.).

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on matters involving the Board of Education of Harford County or other topics related to the Harford County Public Schools, call the school system’s Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203. In addition, the public is invited to log on to the HCPS web site at www.hcps.org. Also, for those who would like to receive emergency or other important information about the school system, log on to schools-out.com and follow directions in signing up for the information to be delivered to e-mail addresses designated.

The Harford County Public School System is attempting to avoid duplication and reduce publication costs by eliminating the printed version of B-Line for those who can access the document on the school system web site. Contact the HCPS Public Information Office at 410-588-5214 or e-mail Don.Morrison@hcps.org. In addition, the public may call the school System’s Customer Relations Action Line at 410-688-0022, which can also be used as a 24-hour-a-day tip line for safety concerns.

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