



## Board Meeting

*February 28, 2000*

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

### **OPEN SESSION**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of Board President **Karen L. Wolf**, Board Vice President **David H. Galbreath** called the public business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County to order at 7:00 p.m., February 28, 2000. The meeting was held in the multi-purpose room of Aberdeen Middle School. Mr. Galbreath thanked the Aberdeen High School Choral Ensemble for their performance prior to the start of the meeting and presented the group's director, **Charles Braungard**, with a certificate of recognition. The Board Vice President also acknowledged the performance of a group of Aberdeen High School Latin dancers under the director of **Diann Stormer**. Mr. Galbreath called for a quorum roll call with all members, except Mrs. Wolf, being present. The agenda was amended to include a recognition of the participation by the Academy of Finance students at Edgewood High School in the Governor's "Groundhog Shadow Day" which was held on February 2<sup>nd</sup>; and to remove Item H under Action Items, Possible Approval – Ratification of Employee Negotiated Agreements. Board Member **Eugene C. Chandler** led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the Pledge, Mr. Braungard and the AHS Choral Ensemble performed the National Anthem.

#### **RECOGNITION**

Board Member **Terry R. Troy** narrated the presentation of several recognition

awards. The first was presented to **Cheryl Landreth**, Harford County's Web Master, who was joined in the presentation by Harford County Public School Web Specialist **Fred Demski**. Ms. Landreth was presented a plaque for her efforts in providing technical assistance to the school system in the development and putting on line of the school web site. A second recognition was presented to Southampton Middle School sixth grader **Erin Rawlick** who was honored for having been part of her school's team which finished fourth in the nation out of 237 teams taking part in the WordMaster Challenge Gold Division at that grade level. Ms. Rawlick, 11, was also honored for having been one of only 35 sixth graders out of 80,000 entered in the nation to get a perfect score on the challenge which asks students to demonstrate their abilities in using difficult words to complete analogies in expressing various kinds of relationships. Southampton teacher-coaches **Eileen Choynowski, Pam Connor, and Pat Bierbower** worked with the students in the December program. A third recognition went to **Benjamin Mayforth**, who is the 2000 March of Dimes Foundation Youth Ambassador. Ben is a five-year-old kindergarten student at Ring Factory Elementary School who has overcome ten operations and at least 20 other procedures in battling birth defects which include spina bifida. Ben and his parents, **Greg and Kim Mayforth** urge those interested in taking part in this year's march, to be held on April 30 at the Forest Hill Recreation complex, to call them at 410-638-8639. A fourth recognition was presented to C. Milton Wright High School junior **Julie Hocker** who was named a Distinguished Finalist in the 2000 Prudential Insurance Company Spirit of Community Award program. Julie, a victim of Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a bone disease, speaks to audiences of all ages about living with her disability. She is a member of her school's orchestra, student government, and other activities, including her role as organizer of a blood drive. The fifth recognition was presented to Supervisor of Career and Technology Education **William Securro**, who accepted the award in the absence of Supervisor of Business Education **LaVerne Pitts**, in recognition of the local school system's participation in the Groundhog Shadow Day. The Edgewood High School-based Academy of Finance students were involved in the program which saw students go to the place of businesses of several local companies to experience the world of work firsthand. School system Partnership Coordinator **Nancy Spence** was recognized for her role in helping to organize the shadow day. Future shadow days will be held throughout the County with C. Milton Wright High School senior **Jeff Weiss** due to shadow Harford County Executive **James Harkins** on March 9.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler and the second of **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.**, the Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Consent Agenda, including minutes from the February 2, 2000 Public Comment and Work Session, and the February 14, 2000, Executive and Business Sessions. The

Board also approved Proposed Resolutions on National Music in Our Schools and Youth Art Month – March; and Maryland Women’s History Month – March – and International Women’s Day – March 8, 2000. The Board also approved revisions to the official membership on the Board’s School Calendar Committee, adding four organizations to the 15-member committee – one representative each from the General Curriculum Committee, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Association of Public School Administrators and Supervisors of Harford County (APSASHC), and the Harford County Education Services Council (HCEESC).

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Michael Cocco**, from the Hampton Ridge community north of Bel Air, repeated his previous stand before the Board, presenting statistics he said proves that moving students as proposed by the Forest Hill Elementary School redistricting committee from their current assignment at Prospect Mill Elementary to Hickory Elementary "makes no sense."

**Kevin Keen**, also of Hampton Ridge, disputed the capacity figures of Prospect Mill Elementary and the projections of enrollment at Prospect Mill and Hickory as presented by the committee. He said the proposed move is "premature" based on his projection figures, and that the Board should not attempt to "piecemeal" changes in enrollment patterns.

Mr. Thomas said he does not support the redistricting of the Hampton Ridge area at this time and agreed with Mr. Keen that such an approach would be "piecemeal and patchwork." He suggested that the Board meet with the County government to form a task force or work group to look into the problems of overcrowding at certain schools and under-enrollment elsewhere. He said the work group should bring in developers since "their actions directly and indirectly impact our schools." Mr. Thomas added that the Board needs a comprehensive and well discussed plan to address the issue on various levels. The Board member said he was willing to make a motion that the Board initiate such a group to address long term growth issues. Mr. Hess suggested that such a move be held over until the March 28, 2000 Board work session on managing growth and balancing enrollment. Board Member **Robert S. Magee** said creating such a group would be a major step and was not on the Board agenda that evening. He said he had served on a growth task force chaired by Judge **John Hardwicke**, former County Council President, which had spent more than a year examining the issue and had created a report. Mr. Magee recommended that the Board read that report before initiating yet another group. Mr. Thomas said he had read portions of the report, but that there had not been a concerted effort with the Board and other groups impacted by the growth to come up with a well-planned solution. He said the issue has been clouded by some parents who have urged that certain schools remain overcrowded rather than shifting students to schools with excess capacity.

Mr. Thomas moved that the Board indefinitely table any consideration of moving secondary students in an attendance area to be created for the new Forest Hill Elementary School to either North Harford Middle or High schools. After receiving assurance that any requests for boundary exceptions on behalf of students by parents living in that area to have the students attend the North Harford schools would be "liberally considered," Mrs. Troy seconded the motion. The Board voted 4 to 2 to support the motion (Mr. Magee and Mr. Hess dissenting).

## **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **CONSIDERATION OF COUNTY REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000 BUDGET REDUCTIONS**

Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** told the Board that the County Executive has shared information with various governmental departments as well as the Sheriff's Department, Harford Community College and the Harford County Public School System during recent months, providing his grave concern about the decreasing revenue streams for county funding. During his State of the County address on February 8, Mr. Harkins said cost of services for county citizens is rising by 7.8 percent yearly while revenue growth is projected to slow to 4.2 percent. As a result, the County Executive has asked that all county departments implement a hiring freeze and return three percent of their FY 2000 appropriations to be reappropriated to their departments in balancing the FY 2001 budgets. While the County schools system is not included in the call for a three percent return and hiring freeze, Mrs. Haas said the Board might want to consider what could be done to conserve funds this year as potential carryover for FY 2001. At the February 14, 2000 Board meeting, the Superintendent and staff were directed to review the current budget and expenditures for the purpose of designating whatever funds could be spared to return to the County (up to three percent) with the understanding that these funds would be reappropriated back to the school system during the next fiscal year. Mrs. Haas said that the school system believes it can identify about \$1.5 million in the salaries and wages account which could be carried over to next year. She said the savings would be realized through a combination of employing longterm substitutes (rather than hiring certificated teachers who would earn benefits as well as higher salaries) and by noting those teachers and other who have or will retire during the school year. Mr. Magee said he is concerned that "important projects" such as the Joppatowne High parking lot or the Havre de Grace High stadium project – which normally benefit from the use of any savings realized through economies in funding – will not benefit from the savings. He said he feels that giving back the funds would "send the wrong message." Mrs. Haas said that such projects are normally funded out of capital accounts. Mr. Thomas moved and Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler seconded that the \$1.5 million be reserved as part of the undesignated fund balance to help fund next year's school budget. Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler said "we cannot afford to ignore the request of the County

Executive." The Board voted unanimously to support the motion.

### **PRESENTATION – REPORT ON SCHEDULING ELEMENTARY HALF-DAY TEACHER PLANNING TIME**

**Lawrence Heitmuller**, assistant principal at North Harford Elementary School and chair of a committee on Scheduling Elementary Half-Day Teacher Planning Time, joined Director of Elementary Education **Pat Skebeck** in reporting to the Board the findings of the committee. The group is recommending that ten early dismissals with students to be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. be implemented into the 2000-2001 calendar to provide for the elementary teacher planning time. Morning kindergarten and kindergarten students would attend from 9:00 until 10:30 a.m. and afternoon pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students would attend from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Schedules for schools involved in fourth tier busing would be modified appropriately. Mrs. Skebeck said that she has scheduled a time to meet with the Harford County Council of PTAs to address some concerns expressed by the leadership of that group concerning the ten early dismissals. Action on the proposal has been scheduled for the March 27, 2000 Board meeting.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mrs. Haas told the Board that the Supervisors of Music and Art, **James Boord** and **Marianne Chambers**, respectively, have put together the Upper Chesapeake Summer Center for the Arts, scheduled for the summer of 2000, a cooperative residential summer camp with Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties taking part in the event to be held at Washington College in Chestertown (MD). She said it would be a one week residential camp for students in grades seven through 12. Mrs. Haas invited Mr. Boord to explain the camp. He said the camp would be interdisciplinary in nature. A grant of \$26,644 was received to partially fund the camp. A charge of \$375 per student will also help fund the experience.

Mrs. Haas invited newly appointed Director of Technology **H. Andrew "Drew" Moore II** to the front to formally meet the Board. Mr. Moore had been appointed on February 13, 2000. Mr. Moore told the Board that this day, February 28, had been his first day on the job and that he was "getting comfortable" in his position, and was looking forward to the challenges of the job. Mr. Moore said he started his career as a programmer moving up to management in his former job at Aberdeen Proving Ground. Both Mr. Hess and Mr. Thomas wished Mr. Moore well in his new job and pledged their support for his efforts.

A third issue addressed by the Superintendent was the status of business partnerships. Mrs. Haas invited Coordinator of Business Partnerships **Nancy Spence** to address the Board. Mrs. Spence presented a handout to the Board telling them that the school system is moving away from the adopt-a-school

model and is in the process of piloting a new system which concentrates on mutual benefit to both partners and schools. She said that partnerships are being redefined from their former status of being listed if a business supplied any goods or services to the school. Mrs. Spence said that all schools are involved in partnerships at some level. Mrs. Haas said the current definition of partnerships is "broader and (involves an) interconnected relationship between business and the school. Mrs. Haas mentioned the "Achievement Counts" program being pushed by the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education through the local Superintendent's Business Advisory Partnership which involved business people coming in to schools to address ninth graders about how important it is to get good grades and attend school regularly. The program's goal is to eventually have employers request and have access to student high school transcripts.

A fourth issue involved a requested \$300,000 fund balance transfer request which would have funded the purchase of replacement vehicles for the Facilities Management Department. The request had not been supported by the County Executive's office. Information was provided that 25 of the 75 trucks owned by the department are 11 years old or older. Mr. Hess said the request is a "safety and productivity" issue. It was revealed that many of the trucks had broken down during the recent snow emergency and resulted in delays in getting the parking lots cleaned.

#### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Thomas noted the presence of **Terry Weaver**, the County Executive's liaison to the school system, who had recently undergone a medical procedure. Mr. Thomas also mentioned the Senate hearing on the prevailing wage measure due to take place the next day with a first reading before the full Senate on March 3. He thanked the parents of students involved in the Forest Hill Elementary School redistricting proposal for the "professional manner" they have presented information to the Board. Lt. Col. Chandler said he feels the Board needs to revisit the issue of the budget transfer request on the Facilities Management trucks.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the second of Mr. Hess, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County will be held on Monday, March 13, 2000, at Aberdeen Middle School, in the multi-purpose room, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

**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 system's Customer Relations Action Line, 410-638-0022 (which can also be used as a 24-hour-a-day tip line for safety concerns).**

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