



Board Meeting

June 11, 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 6:10 p.m. in the auditorium of North Harford High School. Mr. Galbreath requested a roll call which showed all Board members present. Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** moved the agenda be amended to separate the Harcourt School Publishers item from the remainder of the Consent Agenda and that Item “K” – Final Approval of the FY '02 Operating Budget to the June 25, 2001 business meeting. Board Member **Terry R. Troy** seconded the motion and the Board approved unanimously. Mrs. Wolf then moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that the amended agenda be approved with the Board voting unanimously to do so. Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Vice President **Eugene C. Chandler** moved and Mrs. Troy seconded that the items on the Consent Agenda – Approval of Minutes of April 9 & 23 and May 7 & 22 Business meetings, and the April 17 work session – Approval of Monthly Report on Personnel; Affirmation of Monthly Report of Contracts; Approval of Award of

School Bus Contracts; Approval of Award of Relocatable Contract; and Approval of Award of Contracts, Purchase of Natural Gas – be approved. The Board voted 7 to 0 to approve the motion. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Board Member **Thomas D. Hess**, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposal to buy educational materials for participating Kindergarten through fifth grade classes from the Harcourt School Publishers company. Mrs. Haas clarified that the kindergarten program would be a limited one and that schools, working through their School Improvement Teams and communities, would have the option in adopting the materials in all or part.

PRESENTATION

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN 2001

Assistant Superintendent for Operations **Joseph P. Licata** presented the 2001 Educational Facilities Master Plan to the Board of Education. Mr. Licata said the proposed 2002 Capital Budget would be delivered to the Board in mid-June. He said the Facilities Master Plan is a listing of the capital assets of the school system, including school buildings and school offices. Mr. Hess said, according to the Master Plan, the school system should build another middle school, considering the fact the plan calls for middle schools not to exceed a 1,200 student capacity. Mr. Licata pointed out that the State Interagency Committee for School Construction is due to vote soon on a proposal which would reduce the state rated capacity of secondary schools by five percent. He said such a vote would, if it is approved, exacerbate the level of enrollments to capacities by reducing the number of students the state certifies a school can accommodate. He said it would bring the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) into effect sooner.

DISCUSSION

BOARD MEMBERS NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Mrs. Troy received the approval of the Board to appoint Mr. Hess to be the Board's representative to

Mrs. Wolf asked Mr. Licata about the County government's plan to put money into its budget to allow schools to perform beautification programs. Mr. Licata said he had spoken to County leaders and that the program will be run through the Office of Community Services. He said October has been listed as the deadline for application by schools and that each school would be limited to a \$5,000 maximum grant.

Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** said he had reached the "boiling point" in connection with the County's funding level for the school system. He said growth management is an issue which needs to be addressed in the county and that the predominant message he has been hearing is that the school's are inadequately funded. He said he had witnessed the "most severe finger pointing" recently in his six years on the Board and that it was time for a "summit" of all parties involved to consider the problems. He called for all elected officials in the county – mayors, County Council Members, County Executive, and

members of the Harford Legislative Delegation to Annapolis (including District 6), as well as the county's State Senators to be part of the summit to look at long term funding issues in the county as well as capital needs. Mr. Thomas said the summit should consider "global issues" surrounding the problems to "stop the rhetoric." He moved that the school system develop a resolution to that effect. Mr. Hess seconded the motion. Board Member **Robert S. Magee** asked if the summit is intended to supercede the school system's current balancing enrollment effort. Mr. Thomas said that both initiatives would proceed on their own paths. He said it is essential that the summit be convened within the next 60 days. Mr. Thomas added that there had been a "lot of discussion since 1995" about forward funding of school construction by the county. The Board voted 6 to 0 with one abstention (Mr. Magee) to approve the motion.

ACTION ITEM

PROMOTIONS/APPOINTMENTS

The Board approved a series of motions to confirm the appointments/promotions of school administrators. Among those approved were: **JoEllen S. Barnes**, Pupil Personnel Worker; **Robert G. McCone**, Assistant Supervisor for Pupil Services; **Kathleen Sanner**, Supervisor of Planning & Construction; **Richard L. Greene**, Supervisor of Physical Education, Elementary and Middle Schools; Elementary Principals – **Gail I. Dunlap**, Joppatowne Elementary School; **Martha E. Elliot**, Churchville Elementary School; and **Carol S. Hepler**, Fountain Green Elementary School; Elementary Assistant Principals – **Jeffrey M. Fradel**, Bel Air Elementary School; **Kim A. Spence**, Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School; **R. Bradley Stinar**, pool; High School Principal – **Michael Thatcher**, high school assignment; **Macon L. Tucker**, high school assignment; Secondary School Assistant Principal – **Christopher M. Battaglia**, C. Milton Wright High School; **Charles G. "Chas" Hagan**, Harford Technical High School; **Roberta G. Hays**, Magnolia Middle School; **W. Edward Herbold**, North Harford High School; **Robert S. Martin**, Aberdeen High School; **Betty L. Mull**, North Harford Middle School; **James Reynolds**, Edgewood High School; **M. Patricia Walling**, Bel Air High School. In addition, the Board approved the appointments of **Joseph Ciufu**, **Glenn Jensen**, and **Chandra Krantz** as middle school principal pool members and **Thomas Szerensits** as a high school principal pool member.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

A total of 25 citizens signed up to speak to the Board. Five spoke during the agenda item on Balancing Enrollment/Capacities; and 12 spoke on the issue of Boundary Exceptions. Eight of the speakers addressed the Board on general topics. **William J. Hughes** of Jarrettsville told the Board that his son had been deprived of the joy of receiving his diploma on graduation day due to an error made by the school system, adding that he had not received prompt service in having the diploma replaced.

Robert Slagle, Edgewood High School Athletic Director, and **Fran Matthews**, Athletic Director at North Harford High School, said that a trend toward reducing the priority on

athletics has become apparent in recent years.

Josh Zappolal, a first year teacher at C. Milton Wright High School, backed the idea of an educational summit, adding that the school system needs additional funding and support from political leaders.

Lisa Chenoweth of Bel Air, a volunteer in the computer lab at Ring Factory Elementary School, said the lab at the school is being taken away because of overcrowding, joining art and music rooms which are being used for regular classrooms.

Suzie Mahone of Abingdon urged the Board not to redistrict students to “solve poor planning.” She said the Board cannot continue to react to “the crisis of the day.” She added that one group had been excluded from the call for a summit – the citizens.

Sally Cherry, past president of the Joppatowne High School PTSA, said there were rumors that the principal of Joppatowne High was about to be transferred, and that such a move would disrupt the continuity of the school.

Michael Geppi, County Council Member representing the Bel Air area, spoke on boundary exceptions, saying he represented 200 parents of children at the school who were upset about the 63 boundary exceptions – 57 of them for child care – into the school. He said he was requesting a portable classroom for the school.

OLD BUSINESS

PRESENTATIONS

REPORT FROM HARFORD COUNTY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Paul Schatz, president of the Harford County Education Association, said that “new unionism” is the aim of his association. He proposed that HCEA take over the operation of professional development for educators in the county. He said that a school climate survey, created by the National Education Association (NEA) could be given this coming fall at HCEA’s expense to provide information on morale and other issues at the schools.

DISCUSSION

REVISIONS TO PROPOSED POLICY ON BALANCING ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITIES

David Murphy of Box Hill North urged the school system to build additions to community schools adding that moving children by way of redistricting would impact “consistency” for students. He added that standards should be made known so that citizens can compare schools.

Neil Epstein, president of Overview Manor II sub-division said that language in the

proposed policy should have options ranked from least to most intrusive. He said increasing class size would be one usable option in eliminating the need for redistricting.

Debbie Griesinger of Bel Air said that the citizens' call for MSPAP results to be included in the policy had not been heard. She said other options such as keeping sixth grade in elementary schools, utilizing space in schools, tightening boundary exceptions, a 250 to 300 student extension to Bel Air High School and others could be looked at and redistricting should be the last option considered.

Steve Tobia of Overview Manor I in Abingdon asked why there was a reluctance to include MSPAP results in the policy. He pointed to "environmental" issues with the Edgewood area including chemical stockpiles at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground. He said that socio-economic issues such as the criminal problem in the community should be considered. He added that redistricting was being pursued "against the wishes" of citizens and students would be put in "jeopardy."

Drew Kessler of Overview Manor suggested the adding of capacity to Bel Air High School and the trimming of the curriculum if necessary to provide space as well as the cutting back of boundary exceptions before any redrawing of school district lines is undertaken.

Mrs. Haas said that no revisions had been made in the proposed policy until the Board provided direction. She pointed out that the upcoming work session on Title I Public School Choice and the issue involving the recalculation of capacity could impact any effort to balance enrollment. She said the Board needs to proceed to develop the overarching balancing enrollment policy which would provide for a regular review of school boundaries.

Mr. Licata asked the Board if it remained comfortable with the proposed timeline which calls for the proposed policy to be adopted in June with options for balancing enrollment coming to the Board in December and the Board making a decision by March 2002 for implementation in September 2002. Mr. Thomas said he would not be comfortable with approving any timeline until after the summit he had proposed is held. Mr. Hess said the Board needs the balancing enrollment policy and that the summit and policy development could proceed on parallel paths. He said the school system is in a position where it could "fall to mediocrity" unless steps are taken to address the problems of enrollment imbalances. He added that the proposed policy does list options from least to most intrusive and that redistricting should be and is the last option. Mr. Magee said that the school system's web site still refers to "redistricting" instead of balancing enrollments and the system should be careful to ensure redistricting is not the preconceived option. Mrs. Wolf agreed that redistricting should not be perceived as the option preferred by the Board. Mr. Licata pointed out that the original planning had been for a redistricting policy but that the process had evolved as the time has passed during the past school year.

Mr. Hess moved and Mr. Thomas seconded that the Board schedule a work session within the next five weeks to consider the issue of balancing enrollment. The motion passed unanimously.

SUSPENSION OF RULES

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to suspend its rules which restrict consideration of any new business item after 10:00 p.m.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO BOUNDARY EXCEPTIONS AND TRANSFER GUIDELINES

Twelve citizens addressed the Board about boundary exceptions, which allow students to go to a school outside their home attendance area based on approval through the Superintendent's office due to reasons including child care, curriculum, hardship and a miscellaneous category of "other." Currently, there are 1,636 boundary exceptions in the county schools – the vast majority (1,352) in the elementary schools and most of those (1,146) for child care reasons. **Dawn Arruda**, a Ring Factory Elementary School parent, told the board that boundary exceptions in that school work a hardship on those who live in the district. She said that taxpayers should not have to support parents' who make day care arrangements outside their school district. She urged that there be no "grandfathering" of those children on boundary exceptions in Ring Factory if the Board decides to be more restrictive on granting the exceptions.

Roni Chenowith, a member of the Harford County Council representing the Fallston and south of Bel Air areas, said that commercial day care providers have "learned to use the system" in building their day care centers adjacent to desirable schools.

Cindy Mumby, a parent of children attending Ring Factory Elementary, objected to the proposed "pull out system" where special area teachers (art/music) would take students out of the classroom to work with them in small groups instead of having their own classrooms. She said portable classrooms could be an answer and that a portion of the \$1.6 to \$2 million fund balance could be used to fund the facility.

Geri Zahreddine, a Ring Factory parent, added her objections to the boundary exception procedures which currently has that school receiving 45 more students than it sends elsewhere.

Raymond Wilson of Joppatowne said he hopes the Board is careful about what it does in limiting boundary exceptions since it is not just a convenience for some parents but a necessity in providing day care for their children while one or both parents work.

John and Mary Almasy, parents of student(s) at Ring Factory Elementary, urged the Board to place three portables at the facility and to oppose the proposed pull out program for students.

Marykate Keesling, vice president of the Ring Factory PTA, presented the Board with a petition signed by more than 100 of the school's parents urging a more restrictive boundary

exception procedure.

Scott Webber read a letter from **Denise Buckman** who had left due to the late hour, critical of the current boundary exception procedures which she called too lenient for those seeking to receive exemptions from their home school district due to day care needs.

Reva Oliver, another Ring Factory parent, said “no one benefits” when students are granted the right to attend school outside their district at an overcrowded school.

Mrs. Haas told the Board that it does not have a “boundary exception” policy. The only policy in place requires that students attend school in the district in which they live unless granted specific permission to attend elsewhere by the Superintendent. Boundary exceptions are the means by which students attend school outside their district, she said. Mrs. Haas added that, 15 years ago, there were almost no boundary exceptions, but previous superintendents had been liberal in permitting the exceptions in more recent years because there had been available space in most elementary schools. However, as many of the county's schools have become over capacity, the need to make adjustments to the procedures involving boundary exceptions has arrived. Mrs. Haas presented the Board with the proposed changes in the procedures, the chief one being that – except in cases of severe hardship – when a school reaches 97 percent of its state rated capacity, entering boundary exceptions would not be permitted.

Mrs. Wolf, with support from Mr. Thomas, said they would prefer a 95 percent cap and that even hardship cases should be looked at carefully. The Board will give further consideration to the boundary exception proposed changes at its June 25 meeting where it will be listed as an action item on the agenda.

ESTABLISHING PAY SCALES FOR FY 02

In the absence of an agreement with two of the associations representing Harford County Public School employees – the Harford County Education Association and the Harford County Educational Services Council – Mrs. Haas told the Board that salary scales have to be put in place in time for the adjusted levels to be used for pay periods beginning after July 1. Both HCEA and HCESC were at impasse in their negotiations with the Board at the time of the June 25 meeting. The pay scales would have most employees receiving a four percent raise with teachers due an additional one percent from the Governor’s Challenge Grant. If adjustments arise out of the settlement of the impasse arbitration, they would be made to the salary scales at a later time, Mrs. Haas said. Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board adopted the salary scales by a vote of 6 to 0 (Mr. Galbreath had left the meeting at the time of the vote).

BEL AIR HIGH SCHOOL FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS REPORT

Kevin Fleming, Bel Air High School principal, provided the Board with a report on improvements which have been made to his school during the last several months following published reports stemming from a survey done by the school’s PTA. Mr. Fleming reported

on the work orders which had been executed and other efforts to correct the problems that existed in the school. He also provided information on circumstances with custodians and others in the school which had contributed to some of the problems addressed in the PTA survey.

ADJOURNMENT

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler gaveled the meeting adjourned at 12:35 a.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The final regular business meeting of the Board of Education for the 2000-01 school year, will be held Monday, June 25, 2001 (North Harford High School, auditorium, 7:00 p.m.). In addition, the Board will hold two summer business meetings, both at Southampton Middle School (7:00 p.m.). The first will be on Monday, July 9, and the second on Monday, August 13. Also, the Board has scheduled a work session for Monday, July 16 at Southampton Middle School (7:00 p.m.) to discuss the balancing enrollment issue.

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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