



Board Meeting

October 28, 2002

Terry R. Troy, *President*
Robert S. Magee, *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Ruth R. "Robin" Rich
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.
Karen L. Wolf
Mark M. Wolkow
Molly P. Harris,
Student Representative
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - The Board of Education of Harford County regular business meeting was called to order on Monday, October 28, 2002, at 6: 31 p.m. by Board President Terry R. Troy. Mrs. Troy asked that a quorum call be conducted which disclosed that all Board Members were present. Robin R. Rich moved and Karen L. Wolf and Eugene C. Chandler seconded that the agenda be approved as presented and Board members voted unanimously to approve the motion. Mrs. Troy then led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

Each month during the school year, the Board of Education officially inducts into the Harford County Public School Educator Hall of Fame two former HCPS educators as nominated by the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association. The nominees (unless exceptions are made by the Board) must have provided at least 20 years of exceptional service to the school system either in the classroom or as administrators. The nominees are featured in that month's edition of the Harford Schools newspaper and are presented plaques, certificates, and laminated copies of the article at the Board's second regular meeting that month. For October, the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame inductees were Verna A. Cunningham and Lambert E. "Bud" Coakley. Ms. Cunningham contributed 38 years of outstanding service to the Harford County Public School System, 31 of those years as a teacher - most of that time having been spent as a sixth grade Social Studies teacher at Havre de Grace Middle School. She was also a Teacher Specialist in Social Studies for

seven years and served for a half year as Acting Supervisor of Social Studies. Ms. Cunningham is described by her former colleagues as a "master teacher" whose "actions and words let children know they were important and respected." Ms. Cunningham was known for her meticulous preparation and attention to detail as a teacher and teacher specialist. She served in the Harford County Public Schools from 1956 through her retirement in 1997.

Mr. Coakley taught and coached in the Harford County Public Schools from 1953 through 1984. He taught a variety of courses at both Havre de Grace and Edgewood high schools, but was best known for his work at Edgewood where he was a physical education teacher and football/basketball coach for 28 years. He built a dynasty at Edgewood during the 15 years he coached football there, twice piloting his teams to 9 and 1 records. One of his colleagues said Mr. Coakley's chief attribute was his "ability to make each person feel like a valuable, contributing member to the group, whether it was as a team member, a fellow coach, or a member of the faculty." A beloved mentor, he is remembered gratefully by generations of student-athletes for the positive influence he had on their lives. Each awardee accepted the awards from the Board and reflected on their time in the school system, introducing members of their families and friends who had come to be with them in receiving the honors.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jill Hogan spoke to the Board about the positive experiences her child is having as a student at Fountain Green Elementary School, but asked the Board that it consider converting the half time enrichment teacher position at the school to a full time slot. She said some more advanced students are not pushed to reach their full potential because of the lack of a complete enrichment program.

Delores Stanley, a bus driver for the John Archer School for 23 years, appealed to the Board to install air conditioning on the John Archer buses, which serve the often medically fragile students who attend the school. She said some of the students are on her bus in excess of three hours a day and that she has noticed the students she transports have far more serious disabilities than those she transported two decades ago.

OLD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to endorse items on the Consent Agenda, including the minutes from the September 23, 2002 Board Business Meeting; the Monthly Report on Personnel which shows those employed, separated, or taking a leave of absence from the school system during the previous month; Proposed Resolutions on American Education Week, National Educational Support Personnel Day, National Family Week, and Impact Area Aid Assistance; Award of Contract on Vehicles; and Award of Contract for Music Equipment.

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL SAFETY/SECURITY GOALS

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Robert B. Thomas, Jr., the Board voted unanimously to endorse the recommendations of the Superintendent for the 2002-03 Safety and Security Goals. Among the suggestions was the continuation of goals to be accomplished by 2006 contained in the Safety and Security Plan approved by the Board last year. Those goals include the establishment of clear expectations for positive school climates and the maximizing of student learning. Jacqueline C. Haas said this area includes a Board Policy being prepared for submission on harassment and bullying.

Objective two was to provide safe and secure schools during daytime and evening hours. The third objective calls for the maximizing of school building safety and security through student, staff and parent training. And, objective four seeks the expansion of interagency cooperation and partnerships among youth serving professionals and agencies. The school systems Coordinator of Safety and Security Robert Benedetto told the Board that 37 strategies are being used to manage inappropriate student behavior and disruptions/violence. Mr. Benedetto said that, during year two of the plan (2002-03 school year), strategies will include providing two-way communications to all school buildings, revising and updating Emergency Procedures Manuals into a more user-friendly format and conduct "table-top" exercises; create an intranet website to regularly update district-wide safety and security fact sheet; increase administrative leadership training and post-incident debriefing; control school access; establish uniform visitor screening procedures; and secure buildings during non-school hours. Mrs. Haas said a paradox in which the school system finds itself is its desire to be open to community organizations for after school use, yet be able to assure the security of the buildings.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON 'NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND'

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law a bipartisan bill which has come to be known as No Child Left Behind. The bill presents a sweeping array of requirements for public schools and school systems throughout the nation. Two versions of the legislation were developed, the Dodd-Miller Comprehensive Act NCLB (S.940/HR1990) and the one which currently is the focus of the legislation, HR 1. At a session during the fall conference of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Black Caucus of MABE convened a discussion about the intended scope of the No Child Left Behind as developed under the Dodd-Miller proposal. To date, the focus of discussion on the requirements of testing, achievement, teacher quality, and safe schools, representing the scope of HR 1. The more comprehensive intent of other versions of the total bill was to address the many quality of life issues that impact student learning, such as preschool services, after-school services, poverty, and many more. The MABE Black Caucus requested that each local board of education adopt a resolution that supports the full funding and implementation of the Dodd-Miller Comprehensive Act. Acting in concert with the Children's Defense Fund, the resolution proposed to the Board of Education of Harford County calls for the Federal government to address the full scope of No Child Left Behind which applies to those mentioned earlier in this section as well as housing and nutrition for students of low-wage working families, protection of children from abuse and neglect, and many other services for at-risk children. Acting on the motion of Board Member Ms. Rich

and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to support the proposed resolution which resolves that, the Board of Education of Harford County supports all provisions listed in the 'Comprehensive Dodd-Miller' version of the legislation known as HR 1990; and joins its voice with MABE and the Children's Defense Fund to urge funding and implementation of HR 1990.

APPROVED LEGISLATION POSITIONS FOR 2003 MD. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Each year, prior to the beginning of the 90-day General Assembly in Annapolis (and during the session as appropriate) the Board of Education of Harford County takes positions on potential legislation which might come before the lawmakers. Acting on the recommendations of Mrs. Haas and Governmental Relations Coordinator Kathy Carmello, the Board took actions on several issues. Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Thomas, the Board unanimously reaffirmed its opposition to the granting of vouchers to parents for the purpose of paying for their children's non-public education. Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to support the continuance of funding and/or the extension of the law providing local boards of education to have flexibility in the hiring of retired teachers. The current law sunsets on June 30, 2004, and local Boards, because of the current and projected teacher shortage, need to have the avenue as an option. Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board initially voted 5 to 2 to oppose charter schools, but, if the General Assembly does enact legislation authorizing the establishment of charter schools, that local boards be in control and accountable for the use of the local district's curriculum and assessments. Mr. Magee and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler cast dissenting votes, saying that they were unconditionally against such a measure, but changed their votes to the affirmative (making the final vote 7 to 0) so there would be no confusion as to their opposition to charter schools. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Rich and the seconds of Mrs. Wolf and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to support improvements to the pension plans for state employees (including educators). Currently, the state pays only 42 percent of an employee's annual income at retirement. A proposal by a task force calls for the benefit to be increased to 75 percent of the final average salary. Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to oppose a moratorium on the suspensions of elementary students, citing budgetary concerns as well as an infringement on local board prerogatives. Last year's proposal called for a two-year moratorium and the institution of an alternative disciplinary system which would cost an estimated \$28.6 million statewide. Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to oppose any legislation that would reduce the authority of local boards of education in the establishment of policy or the local superintendent's ability to effectively manage the public schools. Similarly, the Board voted unanimously to support the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Thomas to oppose any state-legislated curriculum. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the seconds of Mark M. Wolkow and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to oppose income tax credits for contributions to school tuition. The proposed legislation would provide the credits to individuals or corporations who opt to donate funds to a charitable organization that provides scholarship funds to students who want to attend non-public schools. Because

Harford County abides by a court order which establishes the procedures for a screening process for out-of-county children living in an informal relationship with a caretaker and seeking educational services, the Board voted unanimously to support the motion of Mrs. Rich and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler to take no position on any legislation which would mandate such an arrangement. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to "strongly oppose" any aid to private schools. A motion by Mr. Thomas and second by Mrs. Rich received the unanimous support of the Board to support the continuation of state funding for capital improvements projects in the local school system. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler moved and Mrs. Rich seconded that the Board oppose any unfunded mandates the legislature might impose on the local school system. The motion was passed unanimously. Acting on the motion of Mr. Thomas and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to request that the Harford County Delegation seek to repeal outdated language in the Education Code pertaining to the requirement that the Harford Superintendent and Board take actions beyond any other Maryland sub-division in cases where the sitting superintendent seeks reappointment. Legislation passed in the mid-1980s requires that, by January 1 of the year that is two years before the Harford County superintendent's term ends, the Board must provide public notice in two newspapers of general circulation of the superintendent's intent and conduct an evaluation of the superintendent's professional performance.

NEW BUSINESS

PRESENTATIONS

ANNUAL HIRING REPORT

Members of the Harford County Public School Human Resources Office, led by Assistant Superintendent in that office Donald Harmon, made a presentation to the Board in which they described the hiring of professional employees which had been done for the 2002-03 school year. The team said that 284 teachers had been hired for the current school year out of 1,525 which had applied. They said those figures compare to just 188 hired in 1996 out of 2,508 applicants. The group said it is becoming increasingly difficult to find fully qualified teachers to fill vacant positions, especially in the "critical shortage" areas of math, special education, speech pathology, school psychologist, chemistry, physics, earth science, family and consumer education (home economics), and technology education (industrial arts). Dr. Harmon said, of the 284 hired, 18 (6.34 percent) were African American.

Supervisor in Human Resources Matthew Plevyak said the good news is that turnover in Harford County's teaching corps (7.5 percent) is the lowest among the Baltimore metropolitan counties and Cecil County (Baltimore County's turnover rate this year was 13 percent). One-fourth of those leaving were due to retirements. The group revealed efforts being made to support new teachers in making them successful. Jon O'Neal, certification specialist for Human Resources, said under three percent of Harford's teachers are currently not fully certified (highly qualified). Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said he has "grave concerns" over the as yet not fully defined requirements under the Federal No Child Left Behind legislation in the area of "highly qualified" teachers. He said the new requirements may

work to make it more difficult to have teachers classified as "highly qualified."

BALANCING ENROLLMENTS WITH CAPACITIES POLICY (FIRST READING)

Joseph Licata, chair of the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee, presented the initial report of the group to the Board on a comparison of school capacities and enrollments/projections for September 30, 2002, as required under a policy on Balancing Enrollments, passed by the Board in October 2002. Mr. Licata reported that an initial recommendation from the Superintendent is that there be no changes to the policy which was implemented for the first time last spring with a series of student redistricting and other actions by the Board. Mr. Licata reported, based on a review of capacities compared to enrollments/projections, the following schools be identified for examination in this year's cycle - Darlington Elementary, Prospect Mill Elementary, Bel Air High and Fallston Middle School. Darlington needs to be addressed because of its enrollment/projections which show it at less than the 60 percent enrollment to capacity level identified by the state as the threshold for a mandatory review of a school's continuing operation (the state does not mandate a closure, but does require a review by the local Board). The other three schools have a situation where their current enrollment and projections show a significant over capacity situation. The Board accepted the report and directed that the Technical Advisory Committee provide the Board with detailed recommendations at future meetings on ways to address the situations at the four schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Haas asked that David Volrath, director of secondary education, and Janet Ambrose, director of special education, present the Board with reports on standards as they apply to the number of professionals in those areas compared to recognized levels. Mr. Volrath said there is a need for approximately 46 additional secondary teachers to meet the Board's existing policy on class sizes. Dr. Ambrose said her area currently has one professional for every 56 students in speech resources (compared to the one to 40 standard); and one to 64 occupational therapists (compared to one to 35 standard). Mrs. Haas said it is important for the Board to address the sub-standard ratios in its upcoming budget deliberations.

ADJOURNMENT

With the Board having reached its 10:00 p.m. curfew after which new items cannot be introduced without the Board having voted unanimously to suspend its rules, acting on the motion of Ms. Rich and the second of Mr. Wolkow, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue its regular business meetings at Bel Air Middle School with November sessions scheduled for November 11 and 25; and December meetings slated for December 9 and 16. A work session was scheduled for November 18 (5:00 p.m.) at the HEAT Center in Aberdeen. The Board will shift its regular meetings to Edgewood High

School for the January through March quarter.

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.

The Harford County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. Inquiries related to the policies of the Board of Education of Harford County should be directed to the Director of Public Information at 410-588-5203.