



Board Meeting

April 14, 2003

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

Board of Education of Harford County President Terry R. Troy called the regular business meeting of the Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of Havre de Grace Middle School.

Mrs. Troy directed that a quorum call be conducted which revealed Board Vice President Robert S. Magee was excused due to another commitment and Student Representative to the Board Molly P. Harris was excused due to illness. All other Board Members reported present. Acting on the motions of Board Member Karen L. Wolf and the seconds of Board Past President Eugene C. Chandler the Board voted unanimously to exclude the proposed approval of the Minutes from the February 24, 2003 Board Business Meeting from the Consent Agenda to be considered separately and then to approve the amended agenda.

Board Member Robert B. Thomas, Jr. led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Larry English of Forest Hill said he continues to be concerned about the school system's projections of enrollment growth. He said, while the total numbers may be close, individual school results are "erratic." He said the Board's Balancing Enrollment policy and the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance "work against each other," and requested that Board Members and school representatives serving on the Adequate Public Facilities

Task Force carry that message to the meetings. He pointed to an unforeseen dip in the Southampton Middle School enrollment combined with an unpredicted growth in the enrollment at Fallston Middle School.

OLD BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Member Mark M. Wolkow and the second of Mrs. Wolf and Mr. Thomas, the Board voted unanimously to endorse the Monthly Report on Contracts Signed by the Superintendent as it appeared on the Consent Agenda. Following a series of proposed changes to the minutes as dictated by Mr. Magee and read by Board Member Mr. Wolkow, the Board Member's motion to accept the minutes of the February 24, 2003 meeting as amended and a second by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the amended minutes were approved.

APPROVAL OF ELIMINATION OF POLICY 02.08.105 – SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION/SCHOOL SPONSORED DANCES

Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas told the Board that the portion of Policy 02.08.105 – School Sponsored Dances – directing that no one over 21 years of age could attend school sponsored dances, including proms, had been passed by the Board in 2000 in response to a concern by parents that individuals well over that age were planning to attend a school prom. Mrs. Haas said that, in the intervening years, the Board has waived that portion of its policy at the request of schools. Mrs. Haas said each school has its own procedures governing regulations for attendance and behavior at school sponsored dances and recommended that the Board delete the policy with school-based administrators left to address the individual cases in each school. She further recommended that the Board take the proposed elimination of the policy under advisement for a period of 30 days, reflecting its routine practice, and take action at the end of that period (May 12 Board meeting).

However, because the first of the school proms is slated to occur on April 26, Mrs. Haas also recommended that the Board put its policy on school sponsored dances in abeyance until formal action is taken on the policy. However, Mrs. Wolf said the purpose of the Board's policy was to achieve consistency from school to school and Mrs. Haas confirmed that there would be nothing in the overall school system rules that would prevent individual schools from establishing varying age regulations on dance attendance. Mr. Thomas said he was "divided" in his attitude toward the policy, on the one hand desiring that there be consistency among the schools but that there not be an overall School Board policy on the issue. Mrs. Wolf said the Board could establish a policy that there be no age limit on those attending school dances. Mrs. Wolf moved and the Board passed unanimously that Policy 02.08.105 be put in abeyance until all school proms for 2003 had been held, and that public comment be sought on the issue.

APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR – 2002-03

Assistant Superintendent for Business Services John Markowski introduced John "Jay"

Staab, director of finance for the school system, who has overseen the execution of auditing services performed by the Wooden and Benson firm for the past several years. Mr. Staab said the firm had conducted the audit for the past seven years and had provided excellent service. The Finance Director extended the Superintendent's recommendation that the Baltimore-based firm be contracted again this year at a rate expected to remain \$49,000 to conduct audits of the 2002-03 HCPS financial accounts. Mr. Wolkow asked if, during the past seven years, the proposed auditing account had been put out to bid. Mr. Staab said it had not. Mr. Markowski asked that, if the Board directs that the contract be put out to bid, it be done next fall for the following year's audit since preliminary work would have to be done with the auditor to prepare for a timely execution of the audit. Mr. Thomas, noting that there was no threshold that would require Board action in the awarding of contracted services as there is in the award of contracts involving commodities. Mr. Thomas suggested the award be made to Wooden and Benson for this year but that a policy be developed which would establish a threshold for the awarding of contracts for service. He said that there would be more accountability if such contracts were put out to bid. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler said it is "good business" to bid contracts for services on a regular basis. Mrs. Wolf said such a proposal should be brought before the Board's Policy Review Committee. Mrs. Troy directed that the staff come up with recommendations for such a policy after checking with other school systems to see how they handle contracts for services. Mr. Thomas moved and Board Member Robin R. Rich, along with Mrs. Wolf, Mr. Wolkow, and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler seconded that the auditing services contract for the 2002-03 HCPS financial books be awarded to Wooden and Benson at the cost mentioned. The Board voted unanimously to support the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTIONS:

APPROVAL OF STAFFING PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mrs. Haas called on Director of Special Education Janet Ambrose who told the Board that Maryland State law requires the Board approve a Special Education Staffing Plan for the upcoming school year. The Maryland State Department of Education requires each district annually update the plan and include the document as part of the Local Application for Federal Funds. Dr. Ambrose said the State has dictated that several elements be included in the local plans: that it meet maintenance of effort (match previous year's spending while accounting for increase in enrollment), that students be served in the least restrictive environment, that evidence be shown each student identified as requiring special education services will be provided with free and appropriate public education, and that there be evidence of public input into the process. Mrs. Haas and Dr. Ambrose pointed out that the current 2003-04 HCPS operating budget contains no new positions for special education even though the enrollment in the program is expected to rise. Mrs. Haas said that there is the possibility of about \$600,000 in Federal "pass through" funding that could provide for necessary increases in the local special education program. Acting on the motion of Mrs. Rich and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to approve

the 2003-04 Special Education Staffing Plan as submitted.

APPROVAL OF FY 2004 CAPITAL BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUEST

Supervisor of Planning and Construction Kathleen Sanner told the Board that the mitigation of asbestos and adverse soil conditions in the Aberdeen High School replacement project has created the need to appropriate \$501,382 in additional funds for the project. Mrs. Sanner said the actual work involved with the asbestos removal and replacement of soils was covered through the contingency fund built into the approximately \$40 million project, but the extended time that will be required for the operations/construction manager and the architecture/engineering firm to be on the job (from its original November 2003 to May 2004) requires the additional funds. Mrs. Sanner said her office and the school system's Business Services division have identified enough funds in other projects either completed or with enough contingency to support the use of some funds appropriated in that area to cover the needs at Aberdeen High. She said the Superintendent is recommending the Board support approval of an amendment by the Harford County Executive and County Council to the FY 2004 Capital Budget to reappropriate existing funds to support the completion of the Aberdeen High Modernization Project. A total of 15 projects have been identified in the following amounts: Abingdon Elementary Addition (\$20,000), Church Creek Elementary Addition (\$70,000), Pre-K Additions (\$115,810—closeout), Bakerfield Elementary School Modernization (\$2,230 – closeout), Edgewood Elementary School Modernization (\$130,000), Churchville Elementary School Modernization (\$19,109), Meadowvale Elementary School Modernization (\$100,000), Hickory Elementary School Renovation (\$3,144 – closeout), Youth's Benefit Elementary School Renovation (\$236 – closeout), Meadowvale Elementary School Media project (\$284 – closeout), Bakerfield Elementary School Parking Lot (\$32,376 – closeout), Joppatowne Elementary School Parking Lot (\$1,997 – closeout), Riverside Elementary School Parking Lot (\$4,001 – closeout), Fallston High School Chiller (\$1,945 – closeout), and Harford Technical High School HVAC (\$250 – closeout). Mrs. Sanner said those projects not being closed out will be left open pending other needs at those schools. She added those being closed out have no further needs involving the projects. Mrs. Sanner said a 6.6 percent contingency was built into the Aberdeen project. In answer to a question from Mr. Thomas, she said test borings at North Harford High School indicate there should be no difficulties with base soil. However, she said there will be asbestos issues and there will be extensive tests done on the building this summer after school ends for students. Acting on the motion of Mr. Wolkow and the second of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to support the Superintendent's seeking County approval for the transfers.

PRESENTATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION ON DARLINGTON ELEMENTARY/ FALLSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Assistant Superintendent for Operations Joseph P. Licata presented the Board with the specific recommendations from the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee on

Balancing Enrollment for the 2003-04 school year. Mr. Licata reminded the Board that a report had been made by the Superintendent on October 28, 2002 following a review of the September 30 enrollment/capacities. The Technical Advisory Committee had been subsequently convened and identified several schools that warranted further consideration – Darlington Elementary, Prospect Mill Elementary, Fallston Middle, and Bel Air High School. On November 18, the committee reported to the Board during a work session and, on December 2, the Board approved general recommendations from the Superintendent involving those schools, requesting that the Superintendent return in the spring of 2003 with more specific information on some of the schools. Mr. Licata said meetings with the community, Special Education and Elementary school officials, and others had resulted in a proposal to move approximately six to eight primary students with autism to Darlington Elementary School (contingent on appropriate operating funds being available). Mr. Licata explained that the Maryland State Department of Education requires a review be conducted of a school when its enrollment dips below 60 percent compared to capacity. He said Darlington Elementary is at that level and projections show a continuing erosion of enrollment. However, he said the building is being effectively used by the school program, providing only limited room for the movement of additional students there. Mr. Licata said an Operations Intervention Team had been convened at Fallston Middle School on February 5, with the purpose of finding ways, in the short term, to reduce the impact of an enrollment/capacity which has reached 128 percent. He said the school is served by ten relocatables and classroom space is not an issue. However, he said circulation in the building is poor during change of classes, the cafeteria operation is limited by the configuration and size of the existing space, physical education space is inadequate, and there are some ingress/egress issues due to the timing of arrivals and dismissals between Fallston Middle and Fallston High schools, which share the same driveway at Carr's Mill Road. Mr. Licata said that several adjustments were identified and have been implemented, including an adjustment in dismissal schedules between the two schools to alleviate that problem and a change in serving lines to ease the cafeteria crowding. He said the Director of Secondary Education David Volrath will be working with Fallston Middle Principal Kaye Blome on a possible flexible schedule arrangement which improve traffic flow in the building. Mr. Licata said capital improvements to the building, such as the installation of an alternate staircase at the end of classroom wing 'D' and the installation of a pathway from the rear of the physical education area to the main lobby, as well as the addition of classroom space and ancillary space to accommodate additional students are issues that would require funding. He added they would not provide immediate relief because of funding/construction schedules. Mr. Thomas renewed his call for an immediate cap on enrollment of students new to the attendance area to be placed on school districts such as Fallston Middle's. "Redistricting doesn't work – no new kid should be allowed to enroll at Fallston Middle or Fallston High when the enrollment at those buildings reaches 120 percent," he said. Instead, Mr. Thomas said any child whose family moves into the attendance area should be told they would be bused to a school in an adjacent attendance area where there is room. Mr. Licata said the turnover in existing homes had been largely responsible for the 53 additional students who enrolled at Fallston Middle this year (in addition to the 110 who were redistricted from Southampton Middle School). Both Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Wolf pointed to the "bubble" of enrollment growth which has reached the secondary schools in the county. Mrs. Haas reminded the Board that the ultimate solution

has to be in the building of the new Bel Air area middle/high school (proposed for Patterson Mill Road). She said planning approval for the project was deferred earlier this year by the State Interagency Committee for School Construction (IAC). Mrs. Haas said the decision had been appealed and the school system is awaiting word on the proposal which would involve the State endorsing the project without providing any money this year. A request for money to plan and engineer the building has been endorsed by the County for the FY 04 budget. State Planning approval would, essentially, commit the State to begin construction funding in FY 05. In the best case scenario, a middle/high school could open in 2006 or 2007, she said. Diana Taylor, a citizen, said people move into a community with the intent their children attend the school that serves that district. The specific actions outlined by Mr. Licata and Mrs. Haas did not require formal Board approval since they had endorsed the overall plan in December.

EARLY ADMISSIONS POLICY FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN AGE STUDENTS

Director of Elementary Education Patricia Skebeck reported that, when the Maryland State Board of Education changed the age by which a four-year-old would be eligible to enroll in pre-kindergarten programs from December 31 to September 1 (phased in over a four-year period beginning with the 2002-03 school year) a provision was included permitting local school systems to establish regulations for early admittance of such four-year-olds if they were judged to be precocious. Mrs. Skebeck said that Superintendent Haas is recommending against the Board establishing such a policy. The Elementary Director explained that the Harford County Public Schools' 21 pre-kindergarten programs are established to provide intervention services for those students identified as at-risk. She said, if slots are to be reserved for gifted three-year-olds, it would take away from the 40 positions available at each of the schools where pre-K is offered. And, Mrs. Skebeck said, many three-year-olds, no matter their academic capacity, are not at a physical developmental stage to warrant being in a formal school program. Mrs. Rich said she is against any child going to school earlier than the prescribed age unless he/she is judged to be at risk. (Children younger than four years of age by the prescribed date in need of special education services are served by the County's Child Find program.)

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Haas reminded the Board and public that students had made up two inclement weather days by being in school on April 4 and 7 and teachers would make up two missed in-service days on June 19 and 20. Students will have a 178-day school year (two days were waived by the State Superintendent of Schools) while teachers will work a 187-day schedule for 2002-03. She presented the Board and the public with a brochure summarizing the HCPS Master Plan, due to the County government August 1 and the State Department of Education October 1 in connection with the Bridge to Excellence/No Child Left Behind requirements. Mrs. Haas said the master plan and the brochure would be updated on an annual basis. She pointed out the brochure and the larger master plan have been organized around the Board's four goals. She said the School Improvement Integrated Management System (SIIMS) group has been the moving force behind the completion of the master plan and the brochure. Mrs. Haas said the State Department of Education has convened a group

to review each of the county's master plans and the local system is represented on the group by Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Gerald Scarborough and Supervisor of Research, Testing and Evaluation Carolyn Wood. She said Harford's plan will be used by the group as a prototype in the review. Mrs. Haas added that the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) will hold a retreat on June 19 and 20 during which a panel will review the master plan issues. The Superintendent told the Board that Director of the Office of Technical Information Systems (OTIS) Andrew Moore has certified that upgrades to the public address systems in the school have been completed and the installation of phones in classrooms is due to be completed by the following week, though there continues to be an issue with the need for additional phone lines. She also reminded the Board that the 2003-04 Teacher of the Year finalists have been identified and are listed on the HCPS web site. She said those in the group are "wonderful candidates" and reflect a "very diverse group." The HCPS Teacher of the Year will be announced April 24.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of xxxx and the second of xxxx, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at x:xx p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue its regular meetings at Havre de Grace Middle School during the April/May/June quarter with meetings slated on the second and fourth Mondays (7:00 p.m. on the second Monday and 6:30 on the fourth Monday).

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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