



Board Meeting

May 19, 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

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education of Harford County was called to order by Board President Terry R. Troy at 6:40 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2003 in the cafeteria of Havre de Grace Middle School. Mrs. Troy asked for a quorum call which revealed that Board Vice President Robert S. Magee and Board Member Robert B. Thomas, Jr. were absent but due to arrive later in the evening due to previous commitments. Acting on the motion of Board Member Karen L. Wolf and the second of Board Member Robin R. Rich, the Board voted unanimously to separate items on the Consent Agenda and act on each one separately. The Board then voted unanimously on a motion by Mrs. Wolf which was seconded by Board Past President Eugene C. Chandler to accept the amended agenda. Mrs. Troy led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

HCPS EDUCATOR HALL OF FAME

Each month during the school year since October 2000, the Board of Education of Harford County has inducted two former Harford County Public School educators into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame. Candidates are nominated to the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association, reviewed and approved by that organization, suggested to the

Superintendent, who then recommends that the Board of Education officially induct the candidates. The inductees are featured in articles in the Harford Schools newspaper and their pictures are displayed along with that of all previous nominees on a wall at the school system's central office in Bel Air. For May 2003, the candidates, both posthumously nominated, were Blanche E. Cox and W. Oscar Simmons. Miss Cox spent five decades in the classroom, teaching first in St. Mary's County for ten years before returning to her native Harford County to teach in a series of segregated one-room schoolhouses until 1950 when she became a faculty member of the new Central Consolidated School in Hickory.

Miss Cox, an African-American who had to go to Baltimore City to obtain her high school education because there was no high school for black children in Harford County at the time, finished her career during the 1965-66 school year when, following total desegregation in the county, Central was converted to Hickory Elementary School. Known as a gentle, calming influence on her students, Miss Cox was beloved by all who knew her, often spending her personal money to buy essential materials, clothing, and food for her students.

She was active in her community and church and lived to be 95 years old before passing away in 2000. Mr. Simmons, a combat-wounded veteran of World War II, spent 31 years teaching social studies and being head of the cooperative work experience program at Bel Air High School. An excellent baseball player, Mr. Simmons saw his chances of becoming a professional in that sport ended by the effects of his war wound. He drifted into teaching at the urging of his former high school principal who, by that time, had become president of the then Towson State College. He found his niche as a history teacher where he was both demanding and understanding, receiving the best from his students. Possessor of an outstanding singing voice, he was a longtime member of a church quartet and used his flair for the dramatic as a member of faculty plays at Bel Air High during the 1950s and 1960s.

Mr. Simmons taught at Bel Air High from 1952 through his retirement in 1983 and passed away in 1999 at the age of 76 after having had the opportunity to return to the site in Germany where he had been wounded 50 years before. Members of Miss Cox' and Mr. Simmons' families were awarded plaques, laminated copies of the Harford Schools articles, and certificates signed by all Board Members.

2003-04 HCPS TEACHER OF THE YEAR/ TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Each year for the past nine years, the Harford County Public Schools have recognized up to ten of its outstanding teachers as Teacher of the Year finalists with one of those ten being chosen as Teacher of the Year for the following school year. This year, on April 24, 2003, during the annual Teacher of the Year banquet at the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace, the ten finalists were recognized and Aberdeen High School 29-year veteran science teacher Donna M. Clem was revealed as the school system's 2003-04 Teacher of the Year. During the May 19 Board meeting, Mrs. Clem received many of the prizes and awards which were presented to her temporarily but taken back to be properly engraved since the name of the Teacher of the Year is kept a secret until the moment it is announced at the banquet. In addition, the nine other finalists were invited to the meeting to be recognized and receive a personalized miniature school bus. Finalists included Connie A. Charitonuk, nine-year, fourth grade teacher at Youth's Benefit Elementary School; Michael E. Jacobs, 19-year, Physical Education teacher at Edgewood Elementary School; Tina J. Mackey, seven-year, fourth grade teacher at William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School; Cheryl A.

Manzone, 22-year, Reading Specialist at Emmorton Elementary School; James G. McClenahan, 27-year, Physical Science teacher at Edgewood Middle School; Kimberly D. Miller, nine-year, fifth grade teacher at Edgewood Elementary School; Tracie A. Moots, 14-year fifth grade teacher at Prospect Mill Elementary School; Jacqueline L. Remige, 19-year, fifth grade teacher at Abingdon Elementary School; and Sandra L. Schlehr, 17½ year, Art teacher at North Harford High School.

STATE CHEMATHON CHAMPIONS

Fallston High School's Chemathon team competed against 20 other Level 1 teams – 19 from Maryland and one from Tennessee – in the 2003 Chemathon held at the University of Maryland College Park. The tournament features six-person squads competing as teams in answering written and hands-on problems about Chemistry with the group that accumulates the highest points named State Champions in Level 1 (beginning) and Level 11 (advanced). Fallston High School's Level 1 Chemathon team, coached by 31-year veteran science teacher Pat Stoeri, ran away with the title at their level, winning five of the eight categories of their competition. Members of the team were: Mark Benesch, Whitney Heckler, Megan Purkey, Andrew Simon, Barry Wright III, and Robert Harvey III. Mrs. Stoeri and members of her team received certificates signed by all Board Members.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

A total of nine speakers talked to the Board about the issue of Boy Scouts being permitted to recruit potential members during school time at elementary schools in the Harford County Public School System. At the discretion of principals, Boy Scout recruiters have traditionally been provided approximately 15 minutes each year to present promotional materials to eligible boys during assemblies held at the schools. At the May 19 meeting, more than 200 Boy Scouts and their leaders appeared at the Board meeting to request that the organization be allowed to continue the practice. Speaking on that side of the issue was Larry Bortz of Forest Hill, Steven Tobia of Abingdon, Sen. Robert Hooper, and Del. Joanne Parrott. The supporters pointed to the positive impact Boy Scout membership has with the development of young boys into productive citizens. They said, if the Scouts were not allowed to recruit in the schools, it could have a negative impact on membership. They pointed out that parents have the right not to have their children attend the sessions and there is no obligation for the boys to join. On the other side of the question, Kathleen Mader of Havre de Grace, Rev. Lisa Ward of Havre de Grace, Cheri Wilson of Abingdon, Lisa Chenoweth of Bel Air, and Laurie Dowley of White Hall spoke against allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit in schools, pointing out that the organization is a private group which, by its own admission, they said, discriminates against girls and homosexuals. The speakers said they admire the work done by Boy Scouts with young males and support many of the values they teach, but said there is no place in a taxpayer-supported public school system for a private group to be allowed to recruit members.

In addition, three speakers talked in support of the restoration of State funds used in the past for vocational-technical education, which have now been freed up to flow into the general fund, for use in the money's traditional role. Among the speakers were the Chief Executive

Officer of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce (and former Supervisor of Vocational-Technical Education William Seccurro; Chuck Boyle, president of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Career and Technology Education; and Ron Knowles of Pulaski Highway. Mr. Boyle, President of Boyle Buick in Abingdon, told the Board that CTE funds have been used to produce highly qualified candidates for jobs in industry, five of whom he has hired from the Harford Technical High School automotive program. Dr. Seccurro said that CTE funds have been used to purchase equipment which has been essential in fulfilling the goals of technical education.

Also, DeLane Lewis of Fallston expressed her concern about overcrowding at Fallston Middle School and was critical of the way the school system does its enrollment projections involving housing developments that have not begun to provide students to the school system. She urged the school system and Board of Education to be “proactive” in advocating for what is needed to provide adequate space and staff in the schools.

ACTION ITEMS

MONTHLY REPORT ON PERSONNEL

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Wolf and the seconds of Mr. Wolkow and Mrs. Rich, the Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Monthly Report on Personnel (as of April 30, 2003) which lists those who have left the school system, been placed on leaves of absence, or who are newly employed.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON MS. MOLLY P. HARRIS

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Wolf, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Proposed Resolution on 2002-03 Student Representative to the Board Molly P. Harris. Ms. Harris, a soon-to-graduate senior from C. Milton Wright High School, was cited for her “dedication and commitment” in facilitating communication between the students of the Harford County Public School System and the Board, and was praised for her “significant contributions” as student representative. Ms. Harris, accompanied by her parents, was presented with a certificate signed by all Board Members.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF ELIMINATION OF POLICY 02/08.105 SCHOOL SPONSORED DANCES

In early 2000, issues arose regarding students attending Harford County Public School high school dances and proms with persons over the age of 21. The concern was expressed due to the possibility of alcoholic consumption during dinner prior to attending the prom or other behaviors permitted by law for those over the age of 21, but not for Harford County Public School students. A policy was passed restricting those attending all school sponsored dances (including proms) with students to those 21 years of age or younger. Prior to the enactment of the policy, high school principals screened those attending dances and proms.

According to Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas, since the policy was enacted, the limitations it imposes have proven to be ineffective and unnecessary in dealing with concerns that generated the policy's development. "We survived without the policy and it is my recommendation that we return control on this issue to high school principals," Mrs. Haas told the Board. Mr. Magee, a former high school principal, expressed his opinion that the issue is strictly one that should be addressed by the school and its principal and that the Board had "interjected" itself into an issue that should not have risen to the level of "policy." Mrs. Wolf moved that the first line of the policy be changed to read as follows: "Individuals 21 years or older may attend school sponsored dances as guests of HCPS (Harford County Public School) students provided they agree to follow all school policies and rules and have prior written approval from the school administration. At the suggestion of Mr. Thomas, Mrs. Wolf agreed to remove the word "written" from her motion. It was seconded by Mr. Wolkow and approved by a 6 to 1 vote (Mr. Magee dissenting). Mrs. Wolf then moved with Mr. Wolkow again seconding that the policy be approved as amended. Once more, the Board voted 6 to 1 to approve the motion with Mr. Magee dissenting.

DISCUSSION

HIGH SCHOOL REFORM – CARNEGIE UNIT INCREASE

On May 6, 2003, Director of Secondary Education David A. Volrath presented to the Board at a work session an outline for high school reform which had been the product of a two-year review by secondary principals who looked at aspects of equity in instructional opportunities across the county's middle and high schools. Seven critical elements had been involved in the outcome of the principals' work: every student will have an adult advocate; the Carnegie unit must be replaced or redefined; student anonymity must be banished; teachers must meet with no more than 90 students per day; every student must have a Personal Plan of Progress; imaginative flexible scheduling must be the order of the day; and every principal and teacher will have a Personal Learning Plan. Mr. Volrath's report said one that had emerged – the rigor of the high school program, particularly during the senior year, is lacking. In addition, the current requirement of only three math credits during high school results in many students entering college having skipped mathematics instruction during their senior year or taking a low level math class. Mr. Volrath's work suggested that the development of a career or interest cluster program would create a model that allows students to take several credits in a career or interest cluster area of choice. He said that currently high schools in the county offer a variety of schedules including a seven-period, five-period, and four-period day with the maximum number of credits available being 28 (except in the four-period, semesterized schedule). Mr. Volrath said a 4 x 4 block or flexible modular schedule would offer the opportunity of earning 32 credits in a high school career. Mrs. Haas recommended to the Board that it approve a uniform number of possible credits a student can earn during his/her four years in high school with an opportunity to earn 32 credits during those four years the desired outcome. And, she further recommended that all high school students be required to earn four credits of mathematics during their ninth to twelfth grade years.

Paul Schatz, president of the Harford County Education Association, said the parent

Maryland State Teachers Association and National Education Association stands ready to join with HCEA in working on the issue of high school reform. He said the organizations have “six keys to higher school achievement” which were not addressed in Mr. Volrath’s report or Mrs. Haas’ recommendations. He urged a “process of open communication and collaboration” in the decision-making on reform which, he said, has not occurred to this point with no teachers involved in the proposed changes. He said HCEA will sponsor a session at Southampton Middle School on Wednesday, June 4 starting at 7:00 p.m. at which a consultant from MSTA would outline the six keys he mentioned. He invited Board members and the public to attend the session.

In addition, Diane Taylor of Joppa said she believes the four-period model in operation at Joppatowne High School gives teachers the opportunity to teach more with less homework for students.

Mrs. Rich and Mr. Wolkow expressed their support for more flexibility to allow students to become involved in their areas of interest and to provide four years of math. Mr. Magee said there is a need for high school students to fit Physical Education into their schedules because of the growing problem of obesity among teen-agers. Expressing the sentiment of the Board, Mrs. Troy said the group was providing a “consensus” for the system to move forward with high school reform based on the 32-credit/four-math credit model.

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF BUDGET TRANSFER

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Thomas, the Board unanimously authorized the Superintendent to seek approval from the County Council for a pair of transfers of funds in the FY 2003 Operating Budget. The first involves \$459,455 in Harford County Contingency Reserve funding and unbudget revenues to be allocated for winter weather related expenditures and the health insurance Rate Stabilization Fund payment. The second for \$420,000 involves inter-categorical transfers to cover the health insurance Rate Stabilization Fund payment and utility charges associated with winter rates and usage. Budget Director John Cox will attend a future County Council meeting to seek approval for the transfers.

PRESENTATIONS

FORMATION OF AN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE OF HARFORD/CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Supervisor of High School Physical Education and Athletics Forest Wiest presented the Board with a proposal to form the Upper Chesapeake Bay Athletic Conference – a league made up of public schools from Harford and Cecil counties. Mr. Wiest said the proposal has been an on-again-off-again idea for the past nine years with the time having now been reached when it offers the best solution to forming a competitive league which would be made up of two divisions – Chesapeake and Susquehanna. He said that, during the past ten

years, Bel Air, C. Milton Wright, and Fallston High schools have won 180 county championships compared to just 41 for the remaining six high schools in the county. He added that it is becoming more and more difficult to schedule games with teams in the Baltimore metropolitan counties. Mr. Wiest said schools would be placed in either the upper or lower divisions in the sports both counties play based on recommendations made annually by a panel of coaches, athletic directors and principals. He said the Cecil County Board of Education is being approached with the proposal in a similar way. At the suggestion of Mrs. Troy, it was decided the issue would be placed on the Harford Board's June 9, 2003 agenda as an action item (traditionally, action items are held over for public input for at least one month).

CURFEW

With the 10:00 p.m. curfew approaching, after which no new item can be considered by the Board without unanimous approval of its membership, other items on the agenda were not considered. Mrs. Troy mentioned the recent curriculum awards provided to outstanding work being done by HCPS teachers and to the upcoming commencement exercises to be held in the local high schools and at off-campus locations during the week of May 27 through May 30.

CLOSING

Mrs. Troy declared the meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board of Education of Harford County will continue its business meetings at Havre de Grace Middle School through June with sessions scheduled for Monday June 9 (special starting time of 6:30 p.m.) and June 23 (6:30 p.m.). A work session is also scheduled for the HEAT Center in Aberdeen (7:00 p.m.) to consider the FY 05 Capital Budget proposal. The Board will move to Fallston Middle School for the first quarter of the 2003-04 school year, with one business meeting scheduled for July (July 21, 7:00 p.m.).

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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