



Board Meeting

September 22, 2003

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

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

President of the Board of Education of Harford County Robert S. Magee called the regular business meeting of the Board to order at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, September 22, 2003, at 7:15 p.m. in the gymnasium of Fallston Middle School. Mr. Magee asked for a quorum call of Board Members which showed that Board Member Karen Wolf was absent due to an unavoidable conflict. Acting on the motion of Board Member Mark M. Wolkow and the second of Board Vice President Robert B. Thomas, Jr. the Board voted unanimously to accept the agenda as printed. Mr. Thomas then led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION

Beginning in October, 2000, the Board of Education has been inducting into the Harford County Public School Educator Hall of Fame two former school system educators who had at least 20 years of exemplary service in the Harford Public schools. Those inducted are nominated by the Harford County Retired School Personnel Association (HCRSPA) and are featured in that month's edition of Harford Schools. Their portraits are put on display in a wall of the Board Room at the school system's central office in Bel Air. For September, 2003, the two nominees inducted into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame were William B.

Securro and J. Walter Potter.

Student Representative to the Board Michael M. Morey introduced the two nominees who were present with their families. Mr. Magee and Superintendent Jacqueline C. Haas presented each with a plaque, a Board certificate, and a laminated copy of the article describing their outstanding contributions.

Dr. Securro grew up in the coal mining country of West Virginia, the first in his extended family to go to college. He began his career as a supervisor in the coal mines, but was laid off. After hearing about a job teaching Industrial Arts in the Harford County Public Schools and getting hired to teach that subject at Bel Air High School, he found his calling. He taught at Bel Air High for seven years before being named assistant principal at Aberdeen High, then principal of the vocational-technical center then located in Joppa Hall at Harford Community College. He helped plan and open the new Harford Vocational-Technical High School in 1978 and remained its principal through 1982 when he was named Supervisor of Vocational Education programs for the Harford school system. In that role, he helped bring vocational-technical education into its own. The tireless advocate for career education also helped to build a strong work experience program and create opportunities for students to achieve success in careers of their choosing. Dr. Securro retired in 2000 to become the President and CEO of the Harford County Chamber of Commerce, a job he continues to hold.

Mr. Potter came from Maryland's Eastern Shore to teach Core and POD in Harford County in 1950 at Aberdeen High School. Seven years later, after administrative posts at four other schools, he returned to Aberdeen High as its principal, a job he held for the next 26 years through good times and trying times. Mr. Potter was recognized as a calm and capable leader, keeping Aberdeen High on a course for success despite a number of crises during which he exhibited confidence in his staff and an unwavering concern for the young people who attended the school. Mr. Potter rose to serve in state and national leadership roles with the secondary principals associations, acting as president of the National Secondary Principal's Association in his final year at Aberdeen High. After retirement in 1983, he served for nine years as Executive Director of the Maryland Secondary Principal's Association. Mr. Potter was credited with many innovations during his time as principal including flexible and computer-aided scheduling, as well as programs in art, music and drama. Mr. Potter served as a mentor for both Dr. Securro and Mr. Magee as well as Cecil County Superintendent Carl Roberts and dozens of other top school administrators.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

District 35A Delegate Susan McComas told the Board she is concerned that Bel Air High School's modernization project might be delayed for several years in favor of the construction of the new middle/high school on nearby Patterson Mill Road. She acknowledged that the new school is needed but pointed out that Bel Air High is "deteriorating." She said she is fearful the "squeaky wheel" will get the attention and the Board should not confuse the Bel Air High School community's patience for a lack of

interest.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Member Terry R. Troy and the second of Board Past President Eugene C. Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to approve items listed on the Consent Agenda including the Monthly Report on Personnel, the Award of a School Bus Contract, Approval of Lease Agreement with the Xerox Corporation, and Proposed Resolutions on National Red Ribbon Week, Fire Prevention Week, School Bus Safety Week, and National School Lunch Week.

OLD BUSINESS

DISCUSSION

SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

Harford County Public School System Coordinator of Safety and Security Robert Benedetto presented the Board with an update on measures being taken or considered to ensure the safety of students and staff. He said the four schools are piloting a striker plate (buzz entry system) this school year – Norrisville, Riverside, and Churchville elementaries; and Bel Air High School. He said that the piloting of surveillance cameras in secondary schools will be initiated this school year. Mr. Benedetto said Joppatowne High School will have 16 cameras and two monitoring stations installed at a cost of \$28,752.60. Board Member Robin R. Rich cautioned against becoming too enamored with technology. She pointed out that the 26 school shootings illustrated in a portion of the report provided by Mr. Benedetto all involved students at the schools involved. She said it is more important that young people be made to feel included in the school community.

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT OF DRUG EDUCATION ASST. SUPERVISOR

Acting on the motion of Mrs. Troy and the seconds of Mrs. Wolf and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Sharon Ann Grose to the position of Assistant Supervisor of Drug Abuse Prevention Education. Mrs. Grose, former teacher and counselor in the school system with 27 years experience, most recently has served as Coordinator of At-Risk Programs, a job she held for the past two years.

PRESENTATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Supervisor of Planning and Construction Kathleen Sanner presented the Board with a “second reading” of the proposed FY 2005 Harford County Public School Capital Improvements Program, a document which must be approved by the Board in time for

submission to the State Interagency Committee for School Construction on September 15th. Mrs. Haas reminded the Board the dialogue on the capital budget proposal began in June and will be on the Board agenda once more at its August 11 meeting prior to the expected action on the package at the September 8 meeting. Mrs. Sanner said the number one priority in the proposal will be the “capacity” project of the proposed Bel Air-area middle/high school (Patterson Mill Road). She said another issue to be decided will be the future of the Aberdeen High School North Building which will be vacated when the new Aberdeen High School is completed in time for the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. She said some uses for the building may include the site for an alternative school, a space for staff development, and/or to house the expected overflow student enrollment at Aberdeen High. She also mentioned the back-flow preventer program which involves the installation of devices to separate potable and non-potable water sources within school buildings as well as preventing water from school buildings from flowing back into public water lines should there be a sudden loss of pressure in the public lines. Mrs. Sanner said the \$100,000 in the proposed budget for next year would be used to do a scope study of the needs followed by a several year program during which the devices would be installed. Mrs. Sanner pointed to the “music refresh” program in which replacement musical instruments would be purchased through capital funds. Mr. Thomas pointed out, with limited capital dollars available, worthwhile as the music instrument replacement program is, it may not be possible to fund the purchases through the capital budget. Instead, he said the replacements should be done in the operating budget. Mrs. Haas said, “the sad truth” is that there has been no money available for such a replacement program in the operating budget with barely enough money available to do essential repairs on older equipment, adding that the current musical program “will not be able to be continued” at its high level without an infusion of funds to purchase replacement instruments. Mrs. Sanner said the school system will be working with the State in an attempt to achieve planning approval from that government for the proposed Bel Air-area middle/high school, moving toward a reimbursement of construction funds which are anticipated in advance from the County government. Mrs. Sanner said the proposed new central office administration center would be funded through a redesignation of funds now used for rental office property. She said a previous request for capital money involving relocation expenses would be deleted. Mrs. Sanner added that provisions are included to study the issue of air conditioning those six schools which remain in part or entirely non-air conditioned. She said the program could cost \$12 million and would most certainly involve the need to abate asbestos. Mrs. Sanner said the issue of site acquisition for a new elementary school at an undetermined location in the county has to be addressed while, at the same time, the Board may want to consider the surplus for the purpose of turning back to the County government previously identified school sites at Vale Road (Dill Property), Woodbridge Center (Edgewood) and Box Hill South. She said the modernization of older schools continues to be a need with each elementary school project costing between \$10 and \$12 million. In addition, she said the maintenance of infrastructure such as heating/ventilation/air conditioning, roofs and floors is a perennial concern. Also, security cameras may be the next need in the area of safety and security after the successful completion of two-way communications from classrooms to school offices this past year. Mrs. Sanner said the \$18,713,000 request from the State and \$23,471,344 from the County are both “unachievable. She said the number one State project for next year is the wastewater treatment plant at North Harford Middle School. Mrs. Sanner also brought up

the issue of prevailing wages potentially driving up the cost of the North Harford High School modernization/expansion project, perhaps necessitating the cutback in square footage or the elimination of some “add alternates” at that building. Mrs. Wolf said the site of the Board meeting – Fallston Middle – represents an example of such cutbacks when it was constructed and opened in 1993, resulting in problems for the building which have become significant issues with the current over-enrollment at the school.

BOARD POLICIES 02.01.065 – MEETINGS OF BOARD/ 02.01.170 – HEARINGS

Board Attorney Patrick P. Spicer presented the Board with a first reading of proposed amended policies on Board Meetings and Hearings Before the Board or Hearing Examiner. Mr. Spicer said the policy on hearings would allow for a document submission process in the case of non-evidentiary appeals rather than an appellant appearing before a committee of the Board. Mr. Spicer said the changes would also provide that appeals (other than student discipline appeals) would not be able to be made open to the public by the appellant. The policies will be held over for public input for at least 30 days before returning for action before the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

ACTION

APPROVAL OF BUDGET DIRECTOR

Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mr. Wolkow, the Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of James M. Jewell to be Director of Budget for the Harford County Public School System. Mr. Jewell has been the County Treasurer for the past 21 years. He was one of 23 people to apply for the Budget Director position.

PRESENTATIONS

POLICY ON STAFF TRANSPORTING STUDENTS

Board counsel Patrick P. Spicer presented a proposed Board Policy on Transporting Students by School Employees to the Board. He said the Board’s Policy Review Committee had come to the conclusion there should be a general prohibition to employees transporting students other than administrators or Pupil Personnel Workers. The proposed policy reads: “Employees other than Administrators or Pupil Personnel Workers are prohibited from transporting students to or from school or to or from a school event. Mr. Thomas said he favors clarifying the word “Administrator” to refer to “Principal” and/or “Assistant Principal” if that is to be the meaning of the policy. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler added that he feels the words “in school vehicles” should be added, but was reminded that principals and other school-based administrators do not have access to “school vehicles.” It was directed that the proposed policy appear on the HCPS web site for public input prior to action being taken at the October 27, 2003 Board meeting.

REVISED HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Supervisor of Equity and Cultural Diversity Cathy Price presented the Board with a proposed revised policy on harassment and discrimination. She said the Maryland State Board of Education had voted on June 24, 2003 to change the general language of its regulations to make them more specific by adding sexual orientation to the list of diversity factors, making it read: "All students in Maryland's public schools, without exception and regardless of race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment. Mrs. Price told the Board that it is imperative the local Board Policy mirror that of the state's. The proposed new Board policy will be placed on the HCPS web site for public input and the Board is expected to take action at its October 27, 2003 meeting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUDIT COMMITTEE AND CHARTER DEVELOPMENT

Assistant Superintendent for Business Services John Markowski presented the Board with a proposed structure for a reporting arrangement for the recently hired Internal Auditor. Mr. Markowski presented the Superintendent's recommendation that the Board establish an audit committee consisting of two Board members and one lay member with a finance/accounting/audit background. Several Board members suggested that there be more than one lay member on the committee. Mr. Markowski said the Superintendent further recommends the Internal Auditor have direct staff responsibility to the Board, the Audit Committee and the Superintendent. The proposal would have the Assistant Superintendent for Business Services have day-to-day supervision of the Internal Auditor.

ANNUAL SYSTEM GOALS

Mrs. Haas presented the Board with a review of the annual school system goals for 2003-04, pointing out that the classroom is the central target of the goals, followed by the school and the district/system. She said goal one – healthy, safe, and positive learning environment – involves both good facilities and a positive climate for employees and students within the building. The second goal – meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals as established by "No Child Left Behind" and "Bridge to Excellence" federal and state laws, respectively, involves program accountability and evaluation, state and federally mandated assessments, curriculum development, and adapting or eliminating programs as they are important to student achievement. Goal three – effective use of resources – involves technology, fiscal/budgetary considerations, and partnerships. Goal four – highly qualified workforce in all positions involves recruitment, retention, and professional development and staff training. She said all involved want high quality schools that meet the needs of all students. She discussed the implementation of "learning communities" where all involved including administrators and teachers are dedicated to learning. She called her vision "thoughtful

education” where each part of the process considers ways to improve. Mrs. Haas said “change is inevitable, constant and ongoing in order to adapt to the needs of our students.”

She said indicators of professional learning communities success for 2003-04 will be if all administrative and professional staff utilize professional learning groups to address school and system improvement efforts, thus increasing collaboration; and, if by the end of the school year, directors and assistant superintendents obtain positive responses from principals, instructional facilitators, and department heads about how they have progressed in their use and knowledge of PLCs. Mr. Magee said it is critical that the school system be focused on its major goal of providing high quality learning opportunities for all students.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

INFLATABLE AMUSEMENT RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS

Mrs. Haas told the Board that she will enforce a decision made last year that inflatable rides and amusements not be permitted to be used on school property. She cited a report by the school system’s insurance carrier – the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) insurance pool – that such rides and amusements presented unacceptable insurance risks. She presented information showing the high number of accidents suffered by school aged children on such amusements. Mrs. Haas said that a group supporting a post prom party at a HCPS high school has issued a request for approval of the use of inflatable rides/amusements. Assistant Superintendent of Operations Joseph Licata reported that the county’s 50 schools had escaped serious damage from Hurricane Isabel. He credited the work of principals and school employees with preparing buildings. Mr. Licata said an appreciable amount of perishable food had been lost and that there had been minor wind/water damage. Mr. Licata said several roads were still impassable on September 22, necessitating the closing of the school system for a third day. He reported that, as of that moment, three buildings remained without power. Mrs. Haas explained that the school system had been working closely with the County’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the decision to close the school system on Thursday, September 18, was made when information was provided that the storm might hit as early as 10:00 a.m. that day in the Harford area. She said the fact it arrived much later that evening was something that she could not have predicted given the advance information with which she was provided. Mrs. Haas said the school system would open on time the next day with those schools (Norrisville and Roye-Williams elementary schools, and Harford Tech High School) which did not have power remaining closed (two other schools – North Bend and Meadowvale elementary schools – were closed on Tuesday because those buildings lost power during the night following Mrs. Haas’ report to the Board).

BOARD BUSINESS ITEMS

Mr. Thomas congratulated Mr. Jewell on his appointment and predicted the appointment would be very beneficial for the Harford County Public Schools. He then commented on an editorial which appeared in The Aegis newspaper on September 17 in which Board President Magee was taken to task as being a “Johnny-come-lately” on the issue of the need to control growth and build schools large enough for the students enrolled. Mr. Thomas

called the editorial “grossly unfair and a cheap shot” since Mr. Magee had advocated from the time he was named to the Board four years ago on behalf of the need for adequate space, in particular for a larger Aberdeen High School. “It made my blood boil; when I’m wrong I admit it, but, when I’m right, it’s important to stand up.” He called the editorial “plain garbage,” pointing out the Board has redistricted students 14 times in the past 13 years and has advocated for adequate space only to be turned down by funding authorities, “Yet we’re at fault.” He added, “I salute Mr. Magee.”

Mrs. Troy congratulated Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler for having been one of two Harford Countians nominated by the AIIMS group for statewide Minority Education awards. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler thanked Mrs. Troy and Mrs. Price, supervisor of equity and cultural diversity, whom he credited with being the moving force behind the nomination. The Colonel added he had served with Mr. Magee on the Aberdeen High School Education Specifications committee and confirmed that Mr. Magee and the entire group had advocated for a larger Aberdeen High School (1600 students rather than the 1282 at which it will open). “I’m amazed at where The Aegis does its homework; I wish they would get their facts straight,” he said.

Mr. Wolkow thanked Mrs. McComas for her remarks but pointed out that the schedule for getting school projects done “is much more in their (legislators’) hands than ours.” He reminded that the Board or school system does not have funding authority and suggested that all those involved need to work together to solve the problem.

Mr. Magee thanked Mr. Thomas and Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler as well as others on the Board who had supported him and said that words do hurt, but asserted, “No matter what is written about me I will do my best.”

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler complimented Mr. Licata and Director of Facilities Management Jeffery Ayers and their staff for the efforts during Hurricane Isabel at minimizing damage to schools.

Mr. Magee thanked Fallston Middle School Principal Kaye Blome and her staff for hosting the Board for the past three months in its meetings and mentioned the Board will meet for the next three months at Magnolia Middle School before settling at Bel Air Middle for the final six months of the school year beginning in January.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Mrs. Troy moved and the entire Board seconded and then voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The October regular Board Business meetings will be held at Magnolia Middle School on October 13 (7:00 p.m.) and October 27 (6:30 p.m.) with a work session during which the Board Citizen Advisory Committees will present reports to be held on October 20 at

Southampton Middle School (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: don.morrison@hcps.org; 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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