



45 East Gordon Street / Bel Air, Maryland 21014

Robert S. Magee, *President*
Robert B. Thomas, Jr., *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Ruth R. Rich
Terry R. Troy
Karen L. Wolf
Mark M. Wolkow

Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

Michael D. Morey
Student Representative

Board Meeting
October 13, 2003

CALL TO ORDER – Vice President of the Board of Education of Harford County **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** called the regular meeting of the Board to order on Monday, October 13, 2003, at 7:03 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at Magnolia Middle School. Mr. Thomas asked for a quorum call and announced that Board President **Robert S. Magee** was out of the area on an excused absence and that Board Member **Karen L. Wolf** would be at the meeting several minutes late (Mrs. Wolf arrived at 7:05 p.m.). Board Member **Robin R. Rich** moved and Board Past President **Eugene C. Chandler** seconded that the agenda be adopted as printed. The Board supported the motion unanimously. Mr. Thomas asked Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** to lead those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bill Moore of Joppatowne addressed the Board about his concerns over the procedure of suspending students from school for being truant. He said such action amounted to “a reward” for those students who don’t come to school in the first place. Mr. Thomas directed that Director of Secondary Education **David A. Volrath** and other appropriate school staff be in touch with Mr. Moore about the issue.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

Acting on the motion of Board Member **Terry R. Troy** and the second of Board Member **Mark M. Wolkow**, the Board voted unanimously to approve items on the Consent Agenda including: Affirmation of Monthly Contract Awards, New Bus Order for 2004-05, Future Transfer of Buses, and Affirmation of Appeal Hearing Decision.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY

Mrs. Haas told the Board that a proposed Public Charter Schools Board Policy had been developed at the direction of legislation passed by the 2003 Maryland General Assembly. Mrs. Haas said an application packet is now in draft form and will be submitted to the Maryland State Department of Education. The Superintendent credited Governmental Liaison **Kathryn Carmello** for her work in the development of the proposed policy. She said the reimbursement formula for potential charter school operators is under review by MSDE. In addition, she said the school system has been approached by “three or four groups” including the Mt. Zion Church in Havre de Grace concerning the possibilities of setting

up charter schools. Mrs. Haas said she and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction **Gerald Scarborough** had visited the current Mt. Zion school program, adding she is certain the organization will file to operate a public charter school. Mr. Thomas said the local schools “have no choice” but to adopt a policy in keeping with the legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by **Gov. Robert Ehrlich**, with a requirement the policy be in place by November 1, 2003. Mr. Wolkow asked and was told by Mrs. Haas that enrollment at public charter schools cannot exceed the level established by the charter. Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler thanked Mrs. Haas and Mrs. Carmello for their roles in having the policy drafted. (A full copy of the policy can be accessed by logging onto the HCPS web site at www.hcps.org.) Acting on the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed policy.

DISCUSSION

UPDATE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Mr. Volrath presented the Board with an update on the first steps of the proposed reform of the secondary schools in the Harford County Public Schools. Mr. Volrath reminded the Board that he had come before them during a work session the previous May to outline the concept of the program. He said the product represents more than a year’s work by the secondary principals. Mr. Volrath added, the presentation he was providing the Board reflects a narrowing of the proposal into ten general concepts. Mr. Volrath said he and the planning group of principals did not want to proceed without the Board being aware of the general concepts. Among the pillars of the program for high schools are: equalizing credit offerings at all high schools (currently the eight comprehensive high schools in the county offer seven or eight credits annually); elevating the credit expectations for graduation (currently, students must earn only 21 of a possible 28 credit offerings); organizing schools into smaller learning communities; requiring a fourth year of math experience (students are currently required to earn only three math credits to graduate); and developing additional off-campus education experiences including internet, college, and e-learning.

Also, creating programmatic consistency and equitable opportunities in all high schools; and creating dynamic and connected programs of study

that engage students and inspire the personal ownership of the learner.

In the middle schools, the general concepts of the reform include: providing a consistent program of offerings; providing foreign language for all students in eighth grade; and providing computer education for all students in grades 6, 7 & 8.

Several Board members commented on the proposals and the Board will continue to provide input on the concepts.

PRESENTATIONS

REDESIGN OF THE HCPS INTERNET SITE

Director of Public Information **Donald Morrison** and Director of Technology **Andrew Moore** presented the Board with a demonstration of the redesigned Harford County Public School web site. Mr. Morrison said the Information Office had been charged with establishing a school system web site four years ago. He credited the work of then Instructional Technology Teacher Specialist **Fred Demski** in the development of a viable web site which had served the school system well during that time. He said the revamped site will contain all the information posted on the former site in a more attractive, interactive format. He added that the Information Office would remain responsible for the content of the site. Mr. Moore said there has been a growing call for more interactive services from the HCPS web site, adding that the site had been relocated on an internal server to expedite that and other requests for service, noting the site address had been changed to www.hcps.org. He said an Application Development Team from his office had overseen the redesign. He mentioned the possibility of on-line surveys and employment applications, conference registration forms, and streaming videos as possible future offerings on the site.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Mrs. Haas said that **Mayor David Craig** of Havre de Grace had asked the school system to look at issues of school boundaries in the Havre de Grace area with an eye toward making sure there was room in the schools in that area to accommodate planned future growth. Mrs. Haas said that individual student Maryland School Assessment test results had been sent to about 13,000 parents/guardians on September 24. She said local school systems had been required by

the Maryland State Department of Education to provide the test results directly to parents/guardians and mailing was the only certain way for that to occur. Mrs. Haas said the report card design was easy to understand and had been created with the help of parents. The report cards provided scores for student tests given last March in grades three, five, eight, and ten for reading and math (except for grade ten math which used the results of the geometry High School Assessment) on the individual student, county, and state levels. Mrs. Haas said the school system has an additional responsibility imposed by MSDE (in fulfillment of the 'No Child Left Behind' federal requirements) that school, school system, and state tests results be provided to parents/guardians of all students in the school system. She said those documents will be copied and sent home with students. Mrs. Haas added that the 2004 MSA tests will be given in February or March and will have to be mailed home again. She said, this year, in addition to tests given in third, fifth, eighth, and tenth grades (results to be mailed home in June), additional tests in fourth, sixth, and seventh grades will be given (results to be mailed home in September).

Mrs. Haas told the Board that the September 30 enrollment counts (considered to be the official enrollment report for the 2003-04 school year) showed the number of Harford County Public School students to be down by 55 (from 40,264 in 2002 to 40,209 in 2003). She said most of the decline is traceable to a lesser number of kindergarten students due to the moving back of the age to start school from being five by December 31 to November 30.

DISCUSSION

NEW BUSINESS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Thomas said the Board is seeking a review of the "Inside Track," "B-Line," and "Harford Schools" publications to see if there is a need for all three. He mentioned a "Welcome Home" sign he had seen in his home community of Joppatowne greeting a returning soldier from the Iraqi conflict to whom he had handed a diploma only last June. Mr. Thomas added that, when Mrs. Haas and others said the words to the Pledge of Allegiance earlier in the evening, thoughts of the young soldier made the words more meaningful. Mr. Thomas congratulated Mrs. Troy for having been installed as President of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) recently,

adding that Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler is also on the MABE Board. He also reviewed the upcoming Board meeting schedule.

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler expressed his appreciation to those involved in the nomination and award process for the Willis Award he had received recently as the state's most outstanding Board member of the year; and the Minority Achievement award he will receive on November 5.

Mr. Wolkow congratulated those student-musicians and bands who took part in the Showcase of Bands event at John Carroll School the past weekend. He added that he had learned at the recent Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) meeting about products that provide the potential of saving the Board money and making its operation more efficient. He said he would provide more information on the products at a later time.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the group voted unanimously to support the motion of Lt. Col. (Ret.) Chandler and the second of Mrs. Troy to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board will continue its regular business meetings for the October through December quarter at Magnolia Middle School. Meetings will be held on October 27 (6:30 p.m.), November 10 (7:00 p.m.), and November 24 (6:30 p.m.). The Board will hold a work session at Southampton Middle School on Monday, November 17 (7:00 p.m.) to receive the report of the Superintendent's Technical Advisory Committee on Balancing Enrollment).

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on matters involving the Board of Education of Harford County or other topics related to the Harford County Public Schools, call the school system's Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203. In addition, the public is invited to log on to the HCPS web site at www.hcps.org. Also, for those who would like to receive emergency or other important information about the school system, log on to schools-out.com and follow directions in signing up for the information to be delivered to e-mail addresses designated.

The Harford County Public School System is attempting to avoid duplication and reduce publication costs by eliminating the printed version of B-Line for those who can access the document on the school system web site. Contact the HCPS Public Information Office at 410-588-5214 or e-mail Don.Morrison@hcps.org. In addition, the public may call the school system's Customer Relations Action Line at 410-638-0022, which can also be used as a 24-hour-a-day tip line for safety concerns.

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