

APPROVED MINUTES

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
RETREAT

Sunday, September 12, 2004

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session for retreat on Sunday, September 12, 2004, at 10:10 a.m. at the Marshy Point Nature Center, Marshy Point Road, Baltimore, MD. President James R. Sasiadek and the following Board members were in attendance: Mr. Donald L. Arnold, Mr. Luis E. Borunda, Mr. Nicholas P. Camp, Ms. Frances A. S. Harris, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, and Ms. Joy Shillman. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Kara Calder, Chief Communications Officer; Ms. Brenda Stiffler, Administrative Assistant to the Board, Ms. Cheryl Bost, President of the Teachers Association of Baltimore County, and the media were present.

Mr. Sasiadek distributed the Board of Education Committee Members list from the prior year. Board members were requested to review the committees they were currently on and adjust accordingly. Mr. Sasiadek will make the appropriate changes and disseminate.

Mr. Nevett Steele, Jr., Esq., and Dr. Hayman entered at 10:22 a.m.

Mr. Sasiadek reviewed the student hearing calendar for September through December 2004 including the Board's legislative responsibilities and process. Then, Mr. Sasiadek reviewed constituent group dinners from previous years. Board members commented on possible dinners this year on Board meeting nights and non-Board meeting nights.

Mr. Arnold introduced the morning's presentation on "Effective Governance" to be led by Ms. Kitty Blumsack, Director of Board Development, Maryland Association of Boards of Education.

Through a Power Point™ presentation, Ms. Blumsack reviewed the topics to be covered by the presentation. She started by discussing the Board's self-evaluation results dealing with strengths, gaps, and planning for the upcoming year. She reviewed components of effective teams and roles and responsibilities of Board members.

Board members worked in groups of four to discuss the self-assessment and to create a chart listing:

- Good News – Not surprising
- Good News – surprising
- Growth Area – not surprising
- Growth Area - surprising

Board members came back together and reported on their conclusions. Board members were shown “Three Realities” that every Board member needs to recognize and acknowledge—serving as a member of a team, not having the individual authority to fix problems, and success as a Board member being tied to the success of the Board. An effective team was defined and characteristics were reviewed by Ms. Blumsack.

Ms. Blumsack reviewed the “Stages of Team Development” characteristics, which are:

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Mourning

Mr. Sasiadek announced a lunch break at 12:15 p.m.

Mr. Grzymski left the room at 12:43 p.m.

The presentation by Ms. Blumsack resumed at 12:44 p.m. with a discussion of “Governance as a Theory and System.” Governance is defined as the act of transforming the needs, wishes, and desires of the community into policies that direct the community’s schools.

Mr. Borunda left the room at 12:47 p.m.

Ms. Blumsack’s presentation continued with an explanation of “Building Blocks of Effective Board Governance” and Board effectiveness, vision, and goal. She then reviewed “Board Culture” and understanding what it is. Ms. Blumsack referenced documents from other counties with regard to visions and goals. She was pleased to see this Board has established Board “norms” in areas such as like participation, listening, asking questions, time, and decision-making during meetings and work sessions.

Mr. Janssen left the room at 1:15 p.m.

In discussing “Dimensions of Success,” Board members were shown a triangle. Each point of the triangle had an area important to success—process, results, and relationships. Ms. Blumsack noted that most people possess strengths in two of the three areas.

The presentation continued with Board and Superintendent relationships and roles and relationships and potential consequences when Board members operate outside their roles.

Lastly, Ms. Blumsack reviewed communication between the Board and the Superintendent. It becomes necessary that the lines of communication among Board members, and between Board members and the Superintendent, the staff and the community are clearly understood and agreed to by all. She encouraged Board members to communicate to the Superintendent when issues arise. Dr. Hairston re-emphasized the importance that communication is essential. Dr. Hayman noted the importance for Board members to know each other in order to be a cohesive Board. He asked Board members to keep in mind as an individual, we have influence; however, the president is the spokesperson for the Board.

Mr. Sasiadek noted the various ways Board members receive information from the Superintendent and staff. Mr. Arnold stated it would be helpful to know the process of addressing an issue.

Ms. Blumsack reviewed Baltimore County's Board of Education "norms" with Board members.

Mr. Arnold exited the room at 1:45 p.m.

With regards to the president's evaluation, Mr. Sasiadek presented Board members with a brief summary of his evaluation. He noted the need to work on time allotments at Board meetings. Mr. Sasiadek stated constituent group reports would be moved to the beginning of the Board meeting and time reduced to 3 minutes. This change would be for a four-month period through February 2005.

Mr. Hayden commented on the length of the presentations to the Board. Dr. Hairston stated that an executive summary format would be presented during the Board meetings. Mr. Kennedy suggested Board members receive all reports including the executive summary to allow the Board time to digest the information.

Mr. Sasiadek asked Board members to review the suggestions in the self-evaluation and, together as a Board, work on implementing those items during this school year. Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Shillman recommended the Board receive brief reports from the ad hoc committees throughout the year. Mr. Hayden suggested non-committee members receive copies of the ad hoc committee agendas. Mr. Sasiadek asked the Board to consider creating a committee to look at suggested future goals and provide an update every three months as to whether the Board is reaching those goals.

Dr. Hairston reviewed his priorities for the 2004-2005 school year, which were presented at the Principals Academy in June. Those priorities included:

- Performance Goal 1 and 5
 - Student Achievement
 - Data-Driven Decision-Making
 - Achievement Gap
- Performance Goal 1 and 3
 - Middle School Task Force
 - Highly Qualified Teachers
- Performance Goal 4
 - Suspensions and Expulsions
- Performance Goal 6 and 7
 - Communications
- Performance Goal 8
 - Fiscal
 - Technology
 - Leadership and Accountability

With regards to the budget process, Dr. Hairston noted that a big part of the budget is tied to teachers' salaries. Mr. Hayden stated a teacher shortage would be critical in years ahead including funding of highly qualified teachers. Dr. Hairston remarked on the struggle to move highly qualified people into low performing schools. He stated the need to focus on the system level. Dr. Hairston reminded the Board that the school system has no fiscal autonomy. The school system needs to ensure the expectations and goals can be managed and are obtainable.

Mr. Kennedy commented on placement of highly qualified individuals in schools. Mr. Sasiadek stated veterans can be the best recruiters of teachers.

Ms. Shillman left the room at 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Johnson commented on allowing teachers to use non-traditional teaching models. Dr. Hairston stated BCPS has teachers that are traditional in their ways of teaching. He added that principals and teachers should be ambassadors for the school system.

The retreat was concluded at 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

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