

APPROVED MINUTES

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY RETREAT

Saturday, March 10, 2007

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session for retreat on Saturday, March 10, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at Greenwood. President Donald L. Arnold and the following Board members were in attendance: Ms. Frances A. S. Harris, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Ms. JoAnn C. Murphy, Mr. Joseph J. Pallozzi, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Jr., Ms. Joy Shillman, and Mr. Peter Bacon. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; J. Robert Haines, Esq., Deputy Superintendent; Ms. Rita Fromm, Chief of Staff; Ms. Kara Calder, Chief Communications Officer; P. Tyson Bennett, Esq., Counsel to the Board of Education; and Ms. Brenda Stiffler, Administrative Assistant to the Board were present.

Mr. Arnold opened the meeting with a welcome and reviewed the agenda.

Mr. Arnold reviewed the commencement schedule with Board members.

BOARD MEMBERS' ROLES

Mr. Arnold introduced Ms. Kitty Blumsack, Director of Board Development, Maryland Association of Boards of Education. She discussed the strengths and challenges as well as Board concerns.

Prior to today's retreat, Ms. Blumsack had interviewed Board members and, through assessment, members' responses to frame the presentation.

Dr. Hayman suggested that "when planning for future retreats' Board members should receive the agenda in a more timely manner. Mr. Hayden suggested Board members send items for consideration for the next retreat to the Board president.

Margaret-Ann Howie, Esq., Legal Counsel to the Superintendent, entered the room at 9:20 a.m.

Ms. Blumsack reviewed with Board members their strengths, challenges and concerns based on the interview. Board members worked in groups of three, focusing on the Board's concerns, and discussed possible causes, impact, and strategies.

Board members then reported on their conclusions.

BOARD CONCERNS	POSSIBLE CAUSES	IMPACT	STRATEGIES
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating among ourselves and the officers - ways to make sure we all have the same information	Lack of history on issues	Mixed Board terminology	Schedule time for informal dialogue
<input type="checkbox"/> Handling personal disagreements	Emotions	Power plays	Bring different expertise to different situations
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting input from board members who rarely speak during the board meetings	Not viewed as a problem since the power is in the vote		
<input type="checkbox"/> Being aware of our own non-verbal communication	Must be ourselves		Poker face is important
<input type="checkbox"/> Disagreement is OK, but we need to be more comfortable with it or figure out when we may need to handle it differently	Philosophy, background, pexerience, personal	- Hinders progress - Resentment - Negatively impacts public perception	- Improve communication - Committee reports from Chair
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of trust between the superintendent and the board - sometimes feels like the superintendent holds the board at "arms-length"	- Perceived lack of meaningful cooperation - Staff seems to look to Superintendent for non-verbal cues before responding	- Raises suspicion that Board is not getting the truth - Staff not prepared to answer questions	Evaluation/goal setting with Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/> We don't use e-mail well	- Email not privilege communication - Personal preference	Timely notice of events are missed	None - personal style
<input type="checkbox"/> For some members, preparation isn't always evident - while everyone does the best they can, sometimes there seems to be a lack of understanding about some of the committees' work	- Board members has different expertise - no consequence for not preparing - overwhelming amount of information	Public perceives the Board is not prepared	- Committee reports - Reference Board strengths
<input type="checkbox"/> Ways to avoid micro-managing with the schools. What is the best way a board member can stay informed but not directly involved	Over-estimation of the Board's role	Creates confusion as to whome is responsible for issue (management)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ways to make sure we treat each other in public with respect and dignity	Board must listen to others	Individual viewpoints are important; when decision is made, Board supports collectively	Board should react respectfully, responding to others with whom e disagree
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the impact of our comments to the press - when to speak, etc.		The "press" having become less important seek sensationalism	- Offer a call back. Do not answer immediately. - Direct inquiry to appropriate
<input type="checkbox"/> What do we want board members to do - what are the expectations for attendance, preparation, asking questions, etc.	- Absence of executive summary - Must appear and be knowledgeable at basic information level - Contact Board when absence is anticipated		- Be sure of surroundings in asing questions - Feel free to question committee reports

Next, Mr. Arnold summarized the strategies:

- To consider additional work sessions and retreats
- To include executive summaries
- Adjusting Board schedule
- Checking with counsel regarding legal issues (i.e. committee reports)
- Copies of tapes from Board meetings will be provided to Board members upon request
- Reviewing the policy for canceling Board meetings when schools are closed
- Exploring ways of "streaming" the Board video on the Education Channel

Board members shared with each other what was learned during this process and ways in which the Board can improve.

Mr. Arnold thanked Ms. Blumsack for the presentation and then at 11:48 a.m. announced a brief adjournment for a working lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 12:00 p.m.

PAY SCALES

Through a PowerPoint™ presentation, Dr. Donald Peccia, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Governmental Relations, and Ms. Barbara Burnopp, Chief Financial Officer, shared with Board members the philosophy and concept of the pay scales including:

- Compensation management
- Internal and external pay considerations
- Annual review of compensation plans
- Annual review process
- Salary/structuring of pay scales

Ms. Burnopp demonstrated how to retrieve the pay scales from the BCPS internet. Ms. Burnopp explained how the salary scale works including increments, increases, and longevity steps.

Mr. Arnold asked how the school system deals with the differences of external pay considerations. Dr. Peccia responded that when looking at job classifications, staff reviews the market analysis and adjusts specific classifications, which can include restructuring.

Mr. Janssen asked how the school system addresses disparity when salary grades are further apart. Ms. Burnopp stated that when the Board approves a COLA (cost of living adjustment), each step in the scale would increase by that same percentage.

With regard to a specific salary scale, Mr. Parker asked whether salary grades 1 and 2 eliminated or combined with salary grade 3. Ms. Burnopp stated that advancing grades 1 and 2 up to grade 3 would make job functions in all three salary grades equal and the hourly scales would change. Dr. Peccia reminded the Board that changes to the classifications are management's prerogative and that changes to the salary scales are negotiated.

Ms. Shillman requested a breakdown on the cost of agency hiring of certain classifications such as personal assistants and custodians.

Ms. Burnopp asked Board members to review the salary scales on the website. Dr. Hayman stated that the Board would like to have this information given to them prior to approving future operating budgets.

Dr. Hayman exited the room at 12:58 p.m.

BOARD'S MISSION STATEMENT AND FOCUS AREAS

Mr. Arnold presented Board members with a draft of the proposed mission statement and the Board's 2006-2007 focus areas.

Ms. Murphy shared with Board members the final "draft" mission statement for their consideration. Board members were asked to review the mission statement and consider approving it at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Dr. Hairston shared with Board members feedback the school system has received from the county budget office regarding the proposed FY 2008 operating budget.

Dr. Hairston also shared with Board members the series of sessions that Dr. English, PDK, Inc. Lead Auditor, had attended regarding the findings and recommendations of the curriculum management audit. Dr. Hairston stated that the full audit report would be available on Friday, March 16, on the school system's website.

Ms. Murphy requested a copy of the Curriculum and Instruction organization.

The Board of Education retreat ended at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

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