

APPROVED MINUTES – 12/2/08

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

The Board of Education of Baltimore County met in open session at 6:32 p.m. at Greenwood. Vice President H. Edward Parker and the following Board members were present: Mr. James E. Coleman, Ms. Frances A. S. Harris, Mr. Earnest E. Hines, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Ms. Mary-Margaret O'Hare, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and staff members were present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The open session commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, which was led by Ms. Jasmine Shriver, followed by a period of silent meditation for those who have served education in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

Mr. Parker informed the audience that Board President, JoAnn C. Murphy, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

OLD BUSINESS

403(b) Retirement Plan Provider

Ms. O'Hare moved that the Board approve PCR-212-08, 403(b) Retirement Plan Providers, as presented in exhibit A. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion.

Mr. Uhlfelder asked what happens to participants not covered by the five vendors and what their options are. Kenneth Hoffman, Esq., of Venable, LLP, responded that the funds would remain under the old 403(b) contract until the employee terminates employment with Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) or reaches 59-1/2 years. Mr. Uhlfelder asked whether there would be five separate plans. Mr. Hoffman responded that there is one plan that will cover all five vendors. Mr. Uhlfelder asked if any of the vendors proposed to be the third party administrator (TPA) and at what cost. Mr. Gay responded that all five vendors have indicated their interest in being the TPA; however, three of those vendors indicated there would be no cost in performing the TPA function. Mr. Gay noted that staff will review the three vendors' process, software capability, and reporting mechanisms to determine what the best vehicle would be to maintain and oversee the program. Mr. Uhlfelder expressed concern of selecting vendors that may not be financial sound. Mr. Hoffman stated that, in terms of best practices, BCPS would need to ensure that the vendors are sound, the products being offered are sound, and that periodic reviews are conducted on the product. Mr. Uhlfelder requested an independent analysis of the fiscal soundness of the five selected vendors.

OLD BUSINESS (cont)

Ms. Harris expressed concern over a particular vendor. Mr. Gay stated that BCPS can remove vendors at any time if that vendor cannot fulfill the contract obligations.

Mr. Uhlfelder recommended that BCPS file an extension with the IRS and ask Maryland senators to generate a bill delaying the implementation. Mr. Hoffman stated that the IRS has been asked to extend the deadline of January 1, 2009, and the IRS has indicated that it will not extend the deadline. Ms. Barbara Burnopp, Chief Financial Officer, stated that BCPS could bring provide an update to the Board once the evaluations of each vendor is complete.

Ms. O'Hare asked which three vendors agreed to be the TPA without additional costs to BCPS. Mr. Gay responded, AIG, ING, and Lincoln Financial. Mr. Parker asked whether staff would bring the TPA recommendation to the Board for approval. Mr. Gay stated that, since there is no cost associated with the contract, it typically would not go to the Board for approval. Mr. Gay stated that staff can inform the Board of the contract award for the TPA prior to notifying the vendor.

Mr. Hines requested that staff bring to the Board the TPA vendor recommendation and details of how that vendor was selected.

The Board approved the contract (favor – 7; abstained-2). Mr. Parker and Ms. Roddy did not vote on this item.

REPORTS

The Board received the following reports:

A. **Board of Education Policies** – Ms. Frances Harris, Chairperson of the Board Policy Committee, stated that the Board of Education's Policy Committee met to consider the policies presented this evening, and that the committee is recommending approval of these policies. This is the first reading.

- Proposed Changes to Policy 8360 – ETHICS CODE: Definitions
- Proposed Changes to Policy 8361 – ETHICS CODE: General
- Proposed Changes to Policy 8364 – ETHICS CODE: Financial Disclosure
- Proposed Changes to Policy 8365 – ETHICS CODE: Lobbying Disclosure

REPORTS (cont)

Mr. Janssen asked whether these policies were approved by the Board prior to going to the State Ethics Commission. Ms. Harris responded in the affirmative. Mr. Janssen asked whether the Board needs to vote again on the policies approved by the State Ethics Commission. Mr. Bennett responded that if the Board's vote was to approve these policies, subject to the State Ethics Commission, then there is no need for another vote.

B. **Report on School Staffing** – Dr. Donald Peccia, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and Dr. Alpheus Arrington, Director of Personnel, provided the 2008-2009 staffing report, which included:

- the number of highly qualified teachers (HQT) in core subject areas total 95.76%;
- the number of highly qualified paraeducators in Title I schools total 100%;
- the number of core academic subject (CAS) classes taught by highly qualified teachers total 88.8%;
- the number of elementary teachers who teach in high poverty schools total 97.4%;
- the number of secondary teachers who teach in high poverty schools total 88.9%; and
- the strategies for continued improvement.

With respect to trends in hiring minority teachers, Mr. Janssen asked whether the number of percentages were hires. Dr. Peccia responded in the affirmative.

Ms. O'Hare expressed concern over the low percentage of highly qualified teachers in the high poverty schools. Ms. O'Hare asked what the school system can do to improve these percentages. Dr. Peccia responded that the percentages are steadily increasing. He noted that high school principals need to have input into the selection of their staff to ensure student success. Ms. O'Hare asked what areas teachers are lacking courses in. Dr. Arrington responded that of the 240 non-highly qualified core subject teachers, 121 are special education teachers. Dr. Arrington noted that while the majority of those teachers are in the middle and high schools, a majority are highly qualified in special education but not highly qualified in the content area that they are teaching. These teachers continue to work on their certification with the assistance of the Office of Professional Development.

Mr. Uhlfelder asked whether there was a percentage breakdown of middle and high school high poverty and low poverty schools. Dr. Peccia responded there is no significant difference. Compared with the other Maryland school systems, the

REPORTS (cont)

state has a gap of 25% in the elementary school level between high poverty and low poverty teachers; BCPS does not have a gap. At the secondary level, the state gap is approximately 23%; BCPS has 1.7% gap, which is due in part to the school system's transfer policy.

In regards to the 240 teachers remaining to be highly qualified, Ms. Johnson asked what schools house the majority of these teachers. Dr. Peccia referred to the 2008 high school map as presented in exhibit F. Ms. Johnson asked what academic subjects these teachers are teaching. Dr. Peccia responded 121 are special education, 37 science, 31 math, 16 Spanish, and 18 English. Ms. Johnson asked what school has the largest percentage of teachers needing to be highly qualified. Dr. Peccia responded Woodlawn High School. Ms. Johnson asked if there was a relationship between the number of teachers to be highly qualified and student performance. Dr. Peccia responded that highly qualified sets the foundation; however, it is more important to be highly effective in getting instruction to the students. Ms. Johnson asked how much the school system has paid out in signing bonuses and relocation stipends. Dr. Peccia responded that the information would be provided to the Board in the Friday Letter. Ms. Johnson also requested information on the percentage/number of minority teachers currently in the school system.

Mr. Janssen requested that the breakout of the 240 teachers yet to be highly qualified be shared with the Board in the Friday Letter.

Mr. Hines asked that staff come back to the Board, at the next work session, with ideas of what Board members can do to maximum the county's resources to ensure success.

C. **Curriculum and Instruction Update** – Dr. Patricia Abernethy, Chief Academic Office, provided highlights of the history of assessments:

1989	Sondheim Report
1992-2002	Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP)
2001-2002	High School Assessments (HSA)
2002-2004	Maryland School Assessments (MSAs)
2003	Maryland Functional Tests
2004-2005	HSA's became a graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2009

Next, Dr. Abernethy provided the highlights from the 2008 MSAs:

- Double-digit gain in three elementary schools and four middle schools in reading and mathematics.

REPORTS (cont)

- Percentage point gains in middle school in the number of Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) and special education students scoring proficient in reading.
- Percentage point gains in middle school in the number of Hispanic students and special education students scoring proficient in mathematics.
- Double-digit gain in six elementary schools in the number of students scoring advanced in reading.
- Double-digit gain in 12 elementary schools in the number of students scoring advanced in mathematics.
- All 27 middle schools had a gain in the number of students scoring advanced in reading and mathematics.

Dr. Abernethy reviewed the curriculum and instruction planning protocols, which included identifying major projects, professional development, web-base Articulated Instruction Model (AIM), service to schools, and continuous improvements. Dr. Abernethy noted that curriculum and instruction supports schools in implementing the BCPS curriculum in every subject. As students progress through the grades, BCPS will analyze disaggregated data to find out which schools need assistance.

The following directors and coordinators provided an overview of their specific content area and next steps: Ms. Patricia Baltzley, Director of Mathematics; Mr. George Newberry, Director of Science; Ms. Tina Nelson, Coordinator of Social Studies; Mr. Rex Shepard, Coordinator of Social Studies; and Ms. Karen Harris, Principal on Assignment, English/Language Arts.

Ms. O'Hare asked if professional development offers more engagement and interaction rather than text. Ms. Baltzley responded that the focus of rigorous, hands-on engagement mathematics for students is the same for teachers.

Mr. Coleman asked how the school system selects schools for pilot programs. Ms. Baltzley responded that, at the elementary level, central office staff works with the area assistant superintendents in the selection of schools for Project C. At the middle school level, pilot programs are with the schools in alternative governance.

Ms. Johnson asked if there are any challenges related to science lab facilities and are the labs sufficient for teachers to deliver instruction. Mr. Newberry responded that many of the school system's labs have recently been renovated and are state-of-the-art. All schools have the necessary chemicals and supplies for teachers to deliver instruction.

REPORTS (cont)

Ms. O'Hare asked if there are any plans to place a comprehensive, financial literacy course at the secondary level. Mr. Shepard responded that Baltimore County has required an economics and public issues course as a graduation requirement. Mr. Shepard shared with Board members one activity. Students are asked to pursue investment options by using the Internet and visiting banks, financial institutes, and investigate investment plans, and make decisions based upon current data. Ms. O'Hare asked if professional development can be placed on Safari Montage for teachers who cannot attend the training. Mr. Shepard responded that the school system uses webinars on rigorous instruction so that interactions do not need to be limited by proximity.

Ms. Johnson asked if the school system teaches basic finances such as checking and savings accounts, managing budgets, and home buying process. Mr. Shepard responded that students perform banking investments and saving opportunities. He also noted that students construct a budget during the course.

Mr. Uhlfelder asked if the school system has any input on the Commission on Financial Literacy. Dr. Hairston responded that Baltimore County's elementary schools have been actively involved over the past five years with junior achievement and BizWorld.

Ms. O'Hare asked how many individuals are in schools performing support services for teachers, and what percentage of time of the individuals' workday is spent in the school. She also requested information on the evaluation of the *Language!* program. Both items will be placed on a future Curriculum Committee meeting agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Parker made the following announcements:

- The PTA Council of Baltimore County will hold its annual Fall Reception and Workshop on Thursday, October 23, 2008, at New Town High School beginning at approximately 6:00 pm.
- The Northeast Area Education Advisory Council will hold its "meet and greet" with elected officials on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, at the Crossroads Center beginning at 7:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (cont)

- The Board of Education of Baltimore County will hold its next business meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2008, at Greenwood. The meeting will begin with an open session at approximately 5:00 p.m. The Board will then adjourn to meet in closed session. The open session will reconvene at approximately 7:30 p.m. The public is welcome to all open sessions.

Mr. Parker reminded Board members of community functions and Board of Education events scheduled in October and November.

ADJOURNMENT

Since there was no further business, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

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