
Superintendent's Report To the Baltimore County Board of Education

December 6, 2005

As we approach the end of a calendar year and the mid-point of the school year, we are at an optimum position to reassess our progress and to initiate any necessary adjustments to meet school year objectives. At this evening's meeting, I want to discuss some of the many forces that impact on the educational process in general and our school system in particular.

First, I want to review our seismic shift data, information about how this county continues to grow and become more diverse. The county's population has grown more than 10 percent since 1990, and the school system's student enrollment has grown by 24 percent. To address this growing population, the school system has opened 17 schools, with an 18th new school set to open next school year.

Since 1990, the percentage of minorities in Baltimore County has almost doubled, from 15 percent to an estimated 29.7 percent, and minority student enrollment in Baltimore County Public Schools has almost tripled. During this period, the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students has also almost tripled, and the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price meals has jumped from 12.6 percent to 31.8 percent.

While many believe that increased diversity correlates with declining achievement, Baltimore County defies that myth; we have amassed more than five years of steady progress in raising student achievement.

As researcher and educator Dr. Ron Edmonds wrote: "We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far."

The foundation of this administration is our *Blueprint for Progress*, which clearly describes that in Baltimore County we understand that **all** children can learn and we are committed to supporting all children in achieving academic success. Moreover, we understand how important it is to this community and this state and nation that we fully develop the talents of every person. Educating all children is of the utmost interest to all of us and is in our best interest.

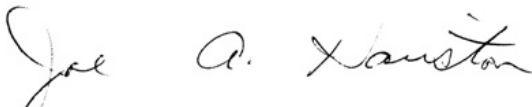
One of our challenges in this regard is simply the amount of time available for teaching and learning in our schools. I continue to assert that, to fully support the purpose of schooling, we must make the best possible use of time available to provide consistency with minimal disruption.

I want to share with you an examination my office has conducted of the time available for classroom learning. Attached please find a visual representation of the allotment of instructional time during the 2005-2006 school year.

In general, this examination yields the following information:

- Of the 187 student days scheduled, up to five may be returned as unused emergency closing days according to Superintendent's Rule 6111. An additional eight days are partial days for at least a segment of our student population, making the total number of full instructional days available for all students in all schools 174.
- Of the 42 weeks in the scheduled school year, only 22 weeks provide five full days of uninterrupted instruction for all students in all schools. Uninterrupted weeks of instruction for all students precede critical, systemwide in-school testing as follows:
 - 9 uninterrupted weeks prior to HSA testing in January
 - 13 uninterrupted weeks prior to MSA testing in March
 - 17 uninterrupted weeks prior to Advanced Placement testing in May
- The largest number of consecutive *interrupted* instructional weeks is five, from the week starting October 3 through the week starting October 31.
- The largest number of consecutive *uninterrupted* weeks is five, from the week starting April 25 through the week starting May 22.

I hope this information is useful as we continue to advance academic achievement through the effective use of resources across the school system.



Joe A. Hairston
Superintendent

Review of Superintendent's Calendar

Past

11/23 **Chase Elementary School Library Dedication**

- 11/29 **Legislative Lunch – District 10**
- 11/29 **Board of Education Dinner with County Executive Jim Smith and
County Council Members**
- 11/30 **K-16 Leadership Council Meeting at Maryland State Department of
Education**
- 11/30 **Legislative Dinner – District 7**
- 12/4-6 **Cambrium Learning Conference, Washington, D.C.**
- 12/6 **Board of Education Dinner with TABCO**
- Upcoming*
- 12/7 **Meeting with Principals and English Department Chairs**
- 12/7 **Student Council Advisory Group Meeting**
- 12/8 **Legislative Dinner – District 8**
- 12/9 **State Superintendents’ Meeting**
- 12/9 **AVID Panel, Washington, D.C.**
- 12/12 **Baltimore County Leadership Education Day**
- 12/14 **County Executive Luncheon with Regional Manufacturing Institute**
- 12/19 **Legislative Dinner – District 6**