
Superintendent's Report To the Baltimore County Board of Education

January 24, 2006

In my remarks this evening, I have a number of topics I would like to briefly address. This list includes: our communication with students' families; some of the many recognitions and honors that have been coming our way; changing demographics in Baltimore County; and a gift I recently received.

Communication with Students' Families: Connect-ED™

Our schools already do a good job of communicating with students' families – through newsletters, flyers, e-mail, letters home, personal telephone calls, and school-based and school system web sites. By expanding Connect-ED™ systemwide, we will be offering yet another tool to principals to strengthen communications and relationships with students' families.

Through Connect-ED™, beginning this month, a school principal can make one telephone call that reaches – within minutes – all the families associated with the school. This program was piloted in 25 schools during the past summer and fall.

Messages families might receive through Connect-ED™ include upcoming testing, the release of report cards, and schoolwide events. Periodically, I may also use the system to send messages with district-wide implications to the families of all BCPS students.

Recent Recognitions and Honors

In addition to our extended outreach to the community, the community has also been reaching back to recognize and thank us.

At the 18th Annual Fullwood Benefit and Recognition Breakfast, six Baltimore County teachers received Golden Apple Awards for their excellence. Held on Saturday, January 14, the Fullwood Foundation's breakfast honored Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, raised funds for scholarships and other youth services, and recognized the community contributions of civic, education, and business leaders.

Four of the teachers honored are here with us this evening. I would like for them to stand as I call their names:

- Cheryl Brooks, formerly of Chase Elementary School, now a specialist in the Office of Equity and Assurance
- Crystal Collins of Essex Elementary School

- Jodi L. Grosser-González of New Town High School – Baltimore County’s Teacher of the Year for 2005-2006
- Darnell Peaker of Hebbville Elementary School
- Randy Quinn, formerly of Pleasant Plains Elementary School, now an assistant principal at Oakleigh Elementary School
- Susan Truesdell of Reisterstown Elementary School

The teachers honored with Golden Apples exemplify the quality of teaching and dedication to students found throughout Baltimore County Public Schools. They were selected for their effectiveness in the classroom but also for the other invaluable contributions they make to our school communities.

At the same event, I was honored to accept the Fullwood Foundation’s Public School Superintendent of the Year award. This honor reflects the hard work of every Baltimore County Public Schools teacher, student, administrator, parent, Board member, volunteer, and supporter.

Baltimore County students also received honors during recent Martin Luther King celebrations. On January 13, County Executive James T. Smith, Jr., presented Martin Luther King Content of Character Awards to Gabrielle W., a senior at the Carver Center for the Arts and Technology and, of course, our student member on the Board of Education, and Brandon J., a senior at Pikesville High and an AVID student. They were nominated for their leadership and contributions to diversity and for their positive impact on peers and the community. In addition to Gabrielle, Brandon is here with us this evening, along with Pikesville High School’s Principal Dottie Harden, Vice Principal and AVID Coordinator Otis Mitchell, and AVID Coordinator Natalie Bailey.

Finally, I was honored to see Chloe A., a sixth grader at Cockeysville Middle School, receive a second place award in the Martin Luther King Essay Contest, sponsored by the YMCA of Central Maryland and the King’s Landing Women’s Service Club. Her prize was awarded at the 31st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Breakfast held on January 16, 2006. Chloe is here with us this evening, and a copy of her essay is included in your Board packets.

We spend the vast majority of our time focused, as we should be, on the work ahead, on the gaps to be filled and the opportunities to be maximized. I think it is important, now and then, to pause and recognize how far we have come. Honors from the community create a perfect occasion to do that and to promote that public education in Baltimore County is indeed worthy of additional investment.

Seismic Shift

Later in this meeting, I will be sharing with you our updated “Seismic Shift” information on the continually evolving trends in our county and in our school system. I would like to take a moment now to make the connection between this report and the essential business of our schools.

Earlier this school year, we presented to the Board our annual results report, which summarizes the academic progress of our students and supports us in identifying challenges that need to be addressed. At this evening’s meeting, we will hear a report on staffing that looks at our progress in meeting the standards for highly qualified teachers and filling positions in areas of critical need.

Tonight’s seismic shift report is another essential part of the larger picture, putting into context the dynamic environment in which we are working. Our seismic shift data underscores that, as our student population and community continue to evolve, we need to hire staff with the quality of character to expect and nurture high academic achievement from every student. That is how we will continue to achieve more and more positive results.

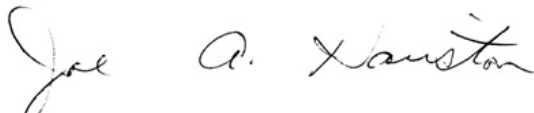
A Special Gift

One final note: recently, I received a very special gift from Maryland Delegate John Arnick. Delegate Arnick received this book, *A Picture Dictionary for Children*, from Dundalk Elementary School while he was a first grader there, in 1939.

I often speak about the enduring power of education – the impact a teacher, lesson, reading assignment, field trip, or book can have on an individual’s life. The fact that Delegate Arnick so carefully kept this book illustrates my point.

Delegate Arnick’s presentation of this book to me holds deep meaning. It reminds me of the enduring traditions and excellence of this school system, which I am honored to lead. It demonstrates that our school system has unwavering support from influential state leaders. And it inspires me by reminding me that what happens in our classrooms today will long be remembered and will influence our future generations of leaders and citizens.

Those are important messages for all of us to remember every day.



Joe A. Hairston
Superintendent

Review of Superintendent's Calendar

Past

- 1/11 Meeting with Student Council Advisory Group
- 1/12 Interview with *Ed Tech* magazine
- 1/13 School Visits with School Board Student Member Gabrielle Wyatt – to Randallstown and Sparrows Point High Schools
- 1/14 Fullwood Foundation Breakfast at Martin's West
- 1/16 YMCA Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast at Martin's West
- 1/17 School Visits with School Board Student Member Gabrielle Wyatt – to Owings Mills High School and Milford Mill Academy
- 1/18 Board of Public Works Budget Appeal
- 1/19 School Visits (Woodlawn Middle School and Woodlawn High School)
- 1/23 Interview with *Scholastic Administrator*
- 1/24 State Board of Education Recognition of Milken Award Winners (including English teacher Kelly Smith of Dulaney High School)

Upcoming

- 1/25 Public Hearing on FY 2007 Operating Budget
- 1/26 Educational Advisory Board Meeting
- 1/26 PTA Council Meeting with Board of Education, Cockeysville Middle School
- 1/27 School Visits with School Board Student Member Gabrielle Wyatt – to Woodlawn High School and Lansdowne High School
- 1/31 Tools for Schools Kickoff at Fullerton Elementary School
- 1/31 Board Work Session – FY 2007 Operating Budget
- 2/1 Curriculum and Instruction Winter Retreat, Sheppard Pratt Conference Center

- 2/2 **Job Shadow Day (with four students interested in education)**
- 2/2 **Governor’s Reception Honoring Award Winning Educators,
Government House, Annapolis**
- 2/2 **County Planning Board Meeting**
- 2/3 **Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM) –
State Superintendents’ Meeting, Anne Arundel County Board of
Education**
- 2/4 **Black Saga Finals for Baltimore County, Randallstown High School**
- 2/8 **Student Council Advisory Group**
- 2/9 **School Visits**
- 2/9 **Board Recognition Ceremony, Cockeysville Middle School**
- 2/13 **Human Resources Mini-Retreat, Sheppard Pratt Conference Center**