

RETREAT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

Sunday, August 26, 2001

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session for retreat on Sunday, August 26, 2001, at 11:05 a.m. in the Greenwood Administration Building Board Room. President Donald L. Arnold and the following Board members were present: Ms. Maria R. Cirincione, Mr. Thomas G. Grzynski, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, Ms. Carolyn Ross-Holmes, Mr. James R. Sasiadek, and Mr. Sanford V. Teplitzky. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; staff members; Mr. Mark Beytin, President of the Teachers' Association of Baltimore County (TABCO); Ms. Cheryl Bost, Vice President of TABCO; and Mr. Robert Anzelc, Executive Director of TABCO, were present.

AGENCY FEE

Dr. Poff, Assistant to the Superintendent for Governmental Relations, provided a brief history of this issue with respect to Baltimore County schools and noted TABCO's requested change in contract language in the agency fee clause.

Ms. Jung entered the room at 11:10 a.m.

Dr. Poff cited an example of how agency fee affects Baltimore City schools. He noted that the Board could be responsible for the collection of fees for non-members, and that the condition of agency fee could detract potential teachers from coming to Baltimore County.

Mr. Grimsley, Executive Director for Human Resources, reviewed the status of agency fee in other Maryland school districts. He noted that the Board's response to TABCO's request would impact negotiations with other groups. In Baltimore County, approximately 25% of teachers are non-members of TABCO. He urged the Board to deal with this issue within the negotiations process.

Mr. Grzynski inquired as to how TABCO's proposal compares with other County agencies. Mr. Grimsley responded that approximately 90% of the County's firefighters and police officers have agency fees that were bargained.

Mr. Beytin shared his belief that if the Board would agree to TABCO's request, it would solidify the partnership between the two groups. He also stated that the law under which TABCO must operate affects teachers hired after 1997, approximately 900 teachers. TABCO's records indicate about 75%-76% membership and membership continues to increase. Mr. Beytin noted that TABCO loses about 800-900 members each year through resignations, retirements, etc. The added revenue that would be realized, should TABCO's request be approved, would allow them to add staff that was eliminated about five (5) years ago during a financial hardship and to support initiatives to provide better service to the school system and teachers. Mr. Beytin noted the estimated agency fee for each teacher would be between \$360-\$385. Of that figure, approximately \$112 would go to TABCO.

Mr. Grzynski inquired where the balance of the money would go. Mr. Beytin responded the balance would be split between the Maryland State Teachers Association and the National Education Association.

AGENCY FEE (Cont.)

Mr. Sasiadek noted that TABCO provides services to non-members. He asked if monitoring was taking place to determine if more non-members were being served than members, to which Mr. Beytin responded there was not.

Ms. Jung asked if TABCO anticipates less participation on the part of teachers if agency fee is put in place. Mr. Beytin stated that in other counties where agency fee has been put in place, membership has gone up significantly. He also stated that TABCO is trying to change the perception of agency fee so people understand that everyone is working together to solve problems.

Mr. Grzymiski asked if Mr. Beytin had any concerns about recruiting. Mr. Beytin responded that he did not feel it would be an issue and informed the Board that at the recent New Teacher Orientation, 375 new members were enrolled.

Mr. Arnold acknowledged the good relationship between the Board and TABCO.

Mr. Hayden moved that the student Board member be allowed to sit in on the upcoming closed session on negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and approved by the Board.

At 12:03 p.m., Mr. Sasiadek moved the Board go into closed session to discuss matters relative to negotiations, pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article, §10-508(a)(9). The motion was seconded by Ms. Jung and approved unanimously by the Board.

CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

The Board discussed a matter dealing with negotiations for a particular group of employees.

At 12:48, Mr. Kennedy moved the Board come out of closed session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sasiadek and approved by the Board.

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Education reconvened in open session at 12:48 p.m.

FACILITIES UPDATE

Mr. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent for Fiscal Services, reported that in a few days, 3D/I would be updating the materials sent to the Board recently.

FACILITIES UPDATE (Cont.)

Mr. Kennedy inquired about the number of classrooms not cleaned in time for the opening of school. Mr. Wingerd, Maintenance/Operations Administrator, indicated that all classrooms would be cleaned and ready for teachers and students by the opening of school on September 4.

Many Board members were pleased to see the early announcement of the delay in the opening of Randallstown Elementary School.

Mr. Hayden expressed concern about boilers being replaced in time for the heating season. Mr. Cassell, Capital Program Administrator, assured Mr. Hayden that all boilers will be up and running by October 15.

Mr. Sasiadek inquired about the Inverness school. Mr. Haines indicated a presentation will be made to the Board when information from the County has been received and reviewed.

Mr. Hayden referenced recent correspondence from the Disabilities Commission with regard to ADA issues in our schools. Ms. Johns, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated that the Commission's concern deals with the school system's lack of a plan for seeing that all BCPS facilities are accessible. Mr. Cassell noted that, upon completion, school renovations taking place now will meet minimum ADA standards. Dr. Hairston stated the need for a thorough assessment in this area, a commitment to do what is needed, and to obtain funding to do the work.

At 1:17 p.m., Mr. Arnold announced a break for lunch.

The retreat was reconvened at 1:45 p.m.

STAFFING UPDATE

Mr. Grimsley provided a summary of vacancies to date within the school system. He noted that of forty-three (43) professional vacancies, thirty-four (34) are teachers. Of that thirty-four (34), seven (7) are for New Town Elementary School. He stated the potential for vacancies on opening day is in the mid-teens. In those positions, we can place provisional teachers or long-term substitutes, if necessary. In other areas, there are thirty-seven (37) instructional assistant vacancies and twenty-three (23) bus driver vacancies. Mr. Grimsley noted that most of the bus driver vacancies are a result of the loss of a contractor in the Southwest Area.

Mr. Kennedy expressed concern about teaching spaces at New Town Elementary School and its impact on the library, cafeteria, and other areas. Ms. Johns indicated additional teaching spaces are available and should not impact the areas mentioned by Mr. Kennedy. She also anticipates the leveling off of enrollment so that class size will be that of most schools. However, she stated if enrollment continues to increase, staff will work with the school to provide relief.

STAFFING UPDATE (Cont.)

Dr. Hairston noted that of New Town's estimated enrollment, 40-60 students will be coming from private schools. Mr. Teplitzky suggested publicizing the fact that students are transferring from private schools to Baltimore County Public Schools.

With regard to a site for a New Town Middle School, Dr. Hairston indicated he had met recently with Senator Hollinger and Delegates Zirkin and Finifter. He also shared with them the system's desperate need for sites in north central Baltimore County and the northeast area of the county.

BOARD GOALS

Sharing an observation with respect to policies, Dr. Hairston asked the Board to consider establishing a Policy Review Committee.

Ms. Howie's Power Point presentation helped Board members understand what policies are, the organizational structure of the existing manuals, the status of current policies, and the Superintendent's recommendations.

Board members decided to start the review process with the 8000 series, which deals with the Board of Education.

As an example of policy review, Mr. Arnold suggested an ad hoc committee could examine the area of Special Education and develop a proposed position to be reviewed, and eventually approved, by the Board. Mr. Teplitzky shared his uncertainty about what position the Board could adopt in this area, other than agreeing to comply with the law to the best extent possible, and noted that much of what drives the Board in Special Education is the law. Mr. Arnold stated the committee could look at Special Education issues and areas where the Board could better facilitate. Mr. Teplitzky cautioned against setting up a structure for implementation and reminded everyone that the Board's role is to develop policy.

Ms. Jung agreed with Mr. Teplitzky. Noting that our lobbying efforts on the local and state level are good, she pointed out a weakness of the Board and staff with respect to its lobbying efforts at the federal level.

Mr. Kennedy stated Special Education was too broad an area to review and suggested looking at particular areas of concern in Special Education.

Board members discussed ideas/concerns and potential goals and ways to convey that information to the Superintendent.

With respect to the goal of closing the achievement gap, Mr. Hayden suggested a report in the next couple of months and another one before the end of the school year describing what actions have and are being taken to address this issue.

BOARD GOALS (Cont.)

Mr. Teplitzky commented the Board should agree on its short- and long-term goals and share them with the Superintendent. He suggested Dr. Hairston could advise the Board as to whether policies are in place to achieve the goals or if policies are needed to assist the Superintendent and staff in achieving those goals.

Mr. Arnold suggested the development of a yearly agenda for the Board.

Board members were asked to submit their proposed list of goals to Ms. Zepp by September 4th. Mr. Arnold and Mr. Sasiadek will then review the list with the Superintendent for presentation on September 11th.

TITLE I UPDATE

Mr. Boone, Executive Director for Federal and State Programs, briefly explained the purpose of the update. Ms. Cassell, Coordinator of Title I and Grant Assistance, provided information with regard to Public Law 106-554 and its impact on school improvement.

As an example of additional support and services for the identified schools, Woodlawn Middle School and Sussex Elementary School, Mr. Boone stated that local and reconstitution funds for Woodlawn Middle School have led to the Professional Development Academy this past summer.

Explaining the transfer options that will become available to the students of Woodlawn and Sussex, Mr. Boone stated that eligible receiving schools must not be overcrowded, nor have a magnet program. Plans to begin the special transfer procedures will begin after the September 30th enrollment data has been reviewed. Information will be provided to the families in a timely fashion and community meetings will be scheduled. The procedures allow for the opening of school with a stable environment and a clear focus.

Mr. Sasiadek asked how a situation would be handled where a student who transfers out of one of these two schools into an eligible school is absent frequently because, under our policy, transportation is not provided. Mr. Boone stated that as principal of the child's new home school, he/she is responsible to use all of the school's resources—PPW's, social workers, counselors—to work with the child and the family, just as they would with any other child in that school.

In reviewing the proposed procedures, Mr. Boone noted that only students whose home school is Woodlawn Middle or Sussex Elementary are eligible for special transfer. Students attending private school or who are being home schooled are not eligible. He also noted that PL 106-554 is currently one-year legislation.

Ms. Cassell and Mr. Boone reviewed the "Projected Implementation Timeline" for the special transfer option and the timeline for the appeal process. Mr. Boone commented that within a week of receiving the September 30th enrollment data, eligible receiving schools will be identified.

TITLE I UPDATE (Cont.)

Mr. Hayden shared his concern about parents of affected students not being notified earlier of the situation and their transfer option. Mr. Kennedy also inquired about compacting the schedule. Mr. Boone responded the schedule will provide schools an opportunity to present themselves, as well as share information with parents in a timely fashion. The schedule also allows for staff review of accurate data.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. Kennedy asked his colleagues to consider the state association’s legislative agenda. This information was sent to Board members earlier in the month.

FUTURE RETREATS

Mr. Arnold asked that future retreat topics be tied in with the Board’s goals.

Mr. Grzymiski suggested Board members contact Mrs. Zepp with regard to the format of future retreats.

MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS

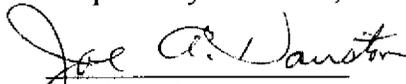
Board members reviewed a list of potential groups with whom they wish to meet during this school year. Letters of invitation will include the Board’s goals for the year, and groups will be asked to limit their discussion to how the group and the Board can work together to achieve those goals.

At 4:17 p.m., Ms. Jung moved the Board go into closed session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article, §10-508(a)(1). The motion was seconded by Mr. Sasiadek and unanimously approved by the Board.

CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Dr. Hairston discussed with the Board a potential vacancy and applicants for this position.

The retreat was concluded at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer