

## TENTATIVE MINUTES

## BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

Tuesday, October 23, 2001

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session at 4:03 p.m. at Greenwood. President Donald L. Arnold and the following Board members were present: Ms. Maria R. Cirincione, Ms. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. Thomas G. Grzyski, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Ms. Jean M. H. Jung, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, and Mr. James R. Sasiadek.

In Hearing Examiner's Case #00-22, the Board entertained oral argument. The matter was heard in closed session.

In addition to the above listed Board members, also in attendance was the appellant; her representative; Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; J. Robert Haines, Esquire, Deputy Superintendent for Business Services; Ms. Rita Fromm, Executive Director for Auxiliary Services; Margaret-Ann F. Howie, Esquire, Legal Counsel to the Superintendent; Carol Saffran-Brinks, Esquire, Legal Counsel to the Board of Education; and Ms. Denise Zepp, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education.

Mr. Walker entered the room at 4:05 p.m.

The proceedings of the hearing were recorded by a court reporter.

The hearing was concluded at 4:55 p.m.

Mr. Teplitzky entered the room at 4:55 p.m.

Board members deliberated on the case.

The Board reconvened in open session at 5:22 p.m. President Donald L. Arnold and the following Board members were present: Ms. Maria R. Cirincione, Ms. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. Thomas G. Grzyski, Mr. John A. Hayden, III, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Ms. Jean M. H. Jung, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, Mr. James R. Sasiadek, Mr. Sanford V. Teplitzky, and Mr. James E. Walker. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and staff members were present.

Dr. Hairston informed Board members that Exhibit C had been withdrawn from the evening's agenda.

At 5:23 p.m., Mr. Sasiadek moved the Board go into closed session to discuss personnel matters, to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice, and to consult with counsel regarding potential litigation pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article, §10-508(a)(1), (a)(7), and (a)(8). The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

### CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Mr. Grimsley reviewed the appointment on tonight's agenda.

Ms. Saffran-Brinks introduced Mr. Thomas Bostwick, Assistant County Attorney. (Mr. Bostwick assisted in the investigation of the case to be described and in the recommendation presented to the Board.)

Mr. Hayden left the room at 5:28 p.m.

Ms. Saffran-Brinks provided Board members background information with regard to a matter currently being litigated and a proposed settlement recommendation. The Board reached a consensus in this matter and directed Ms. Saffran-Brinks how to proceed.

Mr. Hayden re-entered the room at 6:12 p.m.

Ms. Howie briefed the Board on its legal responsibilities with respect to a particular issue. Dr. Hairston also informed the Board that there is the potential for litigation in this matter.

At 6:33 p.m., Mr. Sasiadek moved to adjourn the closed session for a brief dinner recess. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and approved by the Board.

### OPEN SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, reconvened in open session at 7:30 p.m. at Greenwood. President Donald L. Arnold and the following Board members were present: Ms. Maria R. Cirincione, Ms. Phyllis E. Ettinger, Mr. Thomas G. Grzymiski, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Mr. Michael P. Kennedy, Mr. James R. Sasiadek, Mr. Sanford V. Teplitzky, and Mr. James E. Walker. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; staff members; and members of various civic, employee, and community organizations were present as was the media.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The open session commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, which was led by Ms. Kelli Nelson, a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Special Education, and a period of silent meditation for those who have served education in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

Mr. Arnold informed the audience of the various sessions in which Board members had participated earlier in the afternoon.

### MINUTES

Hearing no additions or corrections to the open and closed session minutes of September 20, 2001, and the Report of the Capital Budget Public Hearing and Work Session, October 1, 2001, Mr. Arnold declared the minutes approved as presented.

Mr. Hayden and Ms. Jung entered the room at 7:33 p.m.

### SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Arnold presented Commissions from Governor Parris Glendening to new Board members, Thomas G. Grzymiski and Maria R. Cirincione, and to re-appointed Board member, Warren C. Hayman.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hairston announced that he and County Executive Ruppertsberger presented awards at last night's band festival at Towson University.

Dr. Hairston informed Board members and the audience that this morning, Mr. Arnold and Ms. Bonham accepted a plaque presented by the County Executive and the Baltimore County Workforce Development Council in appreciation for the school system's outstanding contribution to workforce development.

Dr. Hairston stated that Bradley Boggs, a Sparrows Point High School student, has been selected as the Baltimore Ravens' Athlete of the Week. Bradley has also been selected as one of the 2002 Olympic torch carriers. What makes Bradley's accomplishment so unique is that Bradley is legally blind. Dr. Hairston stated Bradley is another example of the quality of students in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

Dr. Hairston announced that Peggy Bagwell, counselor at Woodbridge Elementary School, has been named Maryland Elementary School Counselor of the Year, and Mary Ann Matthews, counselor at Lansdowne High School, has been named Maryland Counselor of the Year.

Dr. Hairston recognized two Japanese educators in the audience who are visiting Baltimore County Public Schools as part of a cooperative program with the Maryland State Department of Education.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### Revisions to Policy 1280 – Boundary Change Practices

Mr. Hayden requested that the term, "Executive Leadership Team," be defined after the first appearance of the term in the policy.

Revisions to Policy 1280 (Cont.)

Mr. Teplitzky moved to accept the policy revisions as amended by Mr. Hayden. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and approved by the Board.

REPORTS

The Board received the following reports:

- A. Report on Testing Procedures and Security—Ms. Donna Flynn, Executive Director of Assessment, noted three (3) sections to the report—Training, Administration, and Local School System Responsibilities—and highlighted a few points. This included the selection of the school test coordinator and some of his/her responsibilities. Ms. Flynn noted that the school system is charged by the State, in a document entitled, “Maryland Accountability Coordinators’ Handbook,” which specifies the duties of local accountability coordinators. She noted an item on tonight’s agenda for reimbursement of reprinting test booklets that is related to a lapse of security in one of our schools.
- B. Report on Elementary Reading Series—Ms. Kathleen McMahon, Executive Director for Elementary Programs, introduced Ms. Jane Lichter, Supervisor in Elementary Programs, who provided a Power Point presentation on the implementation of the elementary reading series.

Ms. Lichter responded to a question from Ms. Ettinger regarding how the Early Childhood Office is working to alleviate the stress felt by kindergarten teachers, particularly those who teach half-day classes, with regard to the amount of material to be covered.

Mr. Grzymiski complimented Ms. McMahon and Ms. Lichter on their efforts in securing parent feedback. He suggested going into the community if PTA and area advisory council meetings do not provide the kind of broad-based perspective needed.

Mr. Kennedy acknowledged that the implementation of the new reading series might cause additional work for teachers during the first year. He also noted that the pilot teachers indicate an easing of the workload after the first year. Ms. McMahon stated a good strategy might be the creation of a video by second year teachers for first year teachers. She indicated technology options would be investigated to make sharing messages among teachers easier.

REPORTS (Cont.)

Dr. Hayman shared his concern about alignment with what is mandated by the State with regard to multicultural education and middle school programs. He also inquired about assessment for the program.

With regard to the alignment with multicultural education, Ms. Johns stated that she has been directed by Dr. Hairston to work with staff to put together a plan. Dr. Dezmon and others are coordinating this effort, which will be brought to the superintendent for his approval. With respect to Dr. Hayman's question about assessment, Ms. Johns responded that Ms. Flynn would be working with an outside researcher to evaluate the program.

Finally, Dr. Hayman suggested that each school be required to create a Home/School Connection document for parents.

Ms. Ettinger shared her hope that when data on the reading program is received and analyzed, it will be disaggregated.

In response to a question from Ms. Ettinger, Ms. Lichter stated that teachers of grades 4 and 5 may continue to use previous literature units along with the recently revised literature units, as long as the lessons are aligned with the Maryland Learning Outcomes. For teachers of grades 1-3, the alignment has not yet been done. The lessons developed by those teachers can be used as long as they are aligned with the Maryland Learning Outcomes.

Ms. Ettinger asked if the committee that assisted with the selection process of the new reading program is still in existence. Ms. McMahan stated the committee was updated at the end of the school year and at the start of this school year. The group received a first quarter report with an update of what has happened thus far and what's been planned. The group will be brought together mid-year to provide their perspectives.

Mr. Walker inquired about collaboration with the Academic Intervention Team (AIT), to which Ms. Lichter described how the AIT participates in staff development, answers questions, and attends training sessions. Mr. Walker was assured that Ms. Copple and the Team work closely with Ms. McMahan and Ms. Lichter.

- C. Report on Title I Public School Choice Transfer—Mr. Boone briefed the Board on the status of the Title I School Transfer Options for Woodlawn Middle School and Sussex Elementary School. Letters have been mailed to families of Woodlawn and Sussex students, and community meetings

REPORTS (Cont.)

have been held. Applications for transfer will be accepted until October 26<sup>th</sup>, and the selection process will occur on October 31<sup>st</sup>. At this point, there are very few requests for transfer from either school.

Mr. Sasiadek stated he was pleased that most parents are choosing to keep their children in the home school, where support is being provided. He further asked that the Board be kept abreast as to how we fare in this process compared to other urban school systems.

D. Report on Results Review—Ms. Flynn noted the report is divided into three (3) sections:

- Sixteen (16) Indicators of Progress,
- Sixteen (16) key strategies that were outlined in the *Blueprint for Progress*, and the
- Appendix.

Through a Power Point™ presentation, Ms. Flynn highlighted several aspects of the report, including:

- System Attendance – Baltimore County Public Schools met the state standard of 94% last year. The disaggregated data showed attendance in elementary school is stronger than in middle or high school.
- Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) – In grade 2 reading, our scores have stayed the same over the last two years, but the system scored higher than the national norm.

In grades 4 and 6 reading, Baltimore County Public Schools exceed the national norm.

In grade 2 mathematics, a significant increase was achieved. In grades 4 and 6, the national norm was exceeded.

Ms. Flynn noted areas where data is not available—MSPAP, IMAP, and grade level standards for promotion.

- Drop-out Rate – Baltimore County's drop-out rate is below the state's 3% standard. Ms. Flynn noted that males, as a group, do not meet the standard.
- Passing Rates (Baltimore County Public Schools Exams) – In preparation for the High School Assessments, the school system has established end-of-year course exams in high school.

REPORTS (Cont.)

Significant improvement has been seen in Algebra I exam scores over two years.

- Advanced Placement Examinations – Baltimore County Public Schools' pass-rate exceeded all other groups.
- SAT Combined Verbal and Math Scores – For 2000-01, Baltimore County Public Schools scores are higher than the state and the nation. When looking at SAT scores by race, our performance mirrors the state and nation.
- Parent Satisfaction – A higher percentage of positive responses were received at the elementary level to the statements, “The school sees parents as important partners” and “This is a good school.”

Mr. Teplitzky noted the drop in PTA membership in middle and high schools and encouraged the PTSA's to work on demonstrating that those parents who do participate, feel better about the school, and, in turn, the school benefits. Mr. Hayden also encouraged more active participation in PTA's.

Dr. Hayman suggested broadening the definition of “involvement” with regard to PTA membership as an indicator of involvement. He also suggested broadening the definition of “achievement.” to include information such as, suspensions/expulsions and club membership and participation. Noting the serious performance gap between African-Americans and those who are not, particularly in the area of SAT's and AP's, Dr. Hayman inquired as to the status of the school system's partnership with The College Board. Ms. Collins, Executive Director of Secondary Programs, responded that a plan for this year is currently being developed. (Plans must be rewritten each year.)

Mr. Teplitzky asked Ms. Fromm to provide an update on the bus driver shortage. Ms. Fromm stated there are currently four (4) vacancies in the Southwest Area and two (2) in the Northwest Area. Twenty-five (25) people are participating in orientation, and 16 have learners' permits.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

On motion of Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Ms. Ettinger, the Board approved the personnel matters as presented on Exhibits H, I, J, and K. (Copies of the exhibits are attached to the formal minutes.)

CONTRACT AWARDS

Mr. Hayden pulled item 2.

On motion of Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Ms. Ettinger, the Board approved items 1, 3, and 4.

1. Supplies Contract: Ceiling Tile
3. Telephone Maintenance
4. Travel Services (One-Year Extension)

Item 2

On motion of Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Ms. Ettinger, the Board approved item 2. Mr. Hayden abstained from discussion and voting on this item.

2. Supplies Contract: Electrical Supplies

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Building Committee, represented by Mr. Kennedy, recommended approval of items 1-6. The Board approved these recommendations.

1. Running Track Replacement – Catonsville High School
2. Electrical Service Upgrade – Holabird Middle School
3. Fee Acceptance – Consultant Design Services for Computer Lab – Chesapeake High School
4. Change Order – Major Maintenance Renovation Project – Westowne Elementary School
5. Change Order – Design Services for Major Maintenance Renovation Project – Sandalwood Elementary School
6. Rescission of Contract Award – Reroofing of Franklin Elementary School

REIMBURSEMENT TO MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On motion of Dr. Hayman, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board approved reimbursement to the Maryland State Department of Education in the amount of \$115,000 for the reprinting of test booklets.

FIELD TRIPS AND FOREIGN TRAVEL

Ms. Bailey requested Board approval of a recommendation to cancel all foreign travel for 2001-02. Out-of-state and overnight field trips would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Day trips would be permitted at the principal's discretion.

Mr. Arnold recommended that the Board discuss the issue tonight and delay a vote on the recommendation until the next Board meeting to allow time for public comment.

Ms. Bailey distributed information to Board members containing the latest information on field trips already scheduled.

Mr. Teplitzky stated he was opposed to a systemwide cancellation on foreign travel through the end of the school year. He recommended some limitations, i.e., a complete review of the planned trips by the schools to determine if students would be safe. He also suggested the purchase of travel insurance that would allow last-minute cancellation of the trip if there were a State Department alert on travel. Mr. Teplitzky also stated it would be appropriate to update the waiver of liability forms to ensure parents are making informed decisions on whether or not they want their children to travel.

Ms. Bailey noted one of the issues raised by parents is the loss of money already paid should a trip be cancelled.

Mr. Hayden stated, as a parent, foreign travel provides invaluable experience to a child's growth, and parents should decide whether travel is safe for their children.

Dr. Hayman agreed with the points made by Mr. Teplitzky and Mr. Hayden. He also shared his concern that other important issues in this system go without a response that would make a difference.

Ms. Ettinger agreed with the value of foreign travel, but as a Board member, felt responsible for the safety of our students.

Ms. Jung questioned whether "foreign travel" should include Canada or Mexico. She expressed her opinion that the school system should continue under the current field trip policy until further notice. Ms. Jung noted that everyone has a heightened sense of responsibility and concern, and she felt that with the combined intelligence of the staff, Board, and parents, reasonable, acceptable, and in most cases, safe conclusions would be made.

Mr. Walker stated his concern for student safety and also shared his feeling that principals should not have to determine whether or not to cancel or deny field trips.

Mr. Sasiadek welcomed community input on this issue. He stated that while he didn't want to overreact to this situation, he wanted to hear from the community and react on the side of caution.

FIELD TRIPS AND FOREIGN TRAVEL (Cont.)

Mr. Grzymski shared his experience of being stranded in California on September 11<sup>th</sup> and hoped our students and staff would never be in that situation. He stated he would support the recommendation because it is consistent and safe.

Ms. Cirincione welcomed the opportunity for citizen input and stated the need to be flexible should the situation change. She echoed Mr. Teplitzky's comments on the importance of foreign travel.

Mr. Arnold explained the purpose of his suggestion to delay voting on this issue was due to the magnitude of this situation and to make sure all points are considered before making a determination.

Mr. Teplitzky proposed adopting the recommendation for day trips within Maryland. He also recommended approval of the recommendation for out-of-state and overnight travel, with the change that the review process be expedited. (A decision on foreign travel could be made at the next meeting.) He noted, in both cases, the plans must be reviewed and determined appropriate and safe.

Mr. Arnold announced that the school system's legal counsel would, if requested, review any travel contracts involving foreign trips and offer advice in the process.

Ms. Ettinger noted that embedded in the proposal for out-of-state travel is conditional approval subject to review a week prior to the trip. She agreed with Mr. Teplitzky's suggestion for adoption of the policy for day trips, out-of-state, and overnight travel. Ms. Ettinger noted that a delay in acting on the foreign travel proposal would allow schools on the verge of making a decision time to look at their options—travel insurance, contracts, and contractual arrangements that would add flexibility.

Mr. Teplitzky moved approval of the recommendation with regard to day trips, overnight, and out-of-state field trips. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayden. The recommendation calls for a case-by-case review, and where necessary, an expedited review of overnight and out-of-state field trips.

Mr. Kennedy questioned whether conditional approval could be rescinded at the last minute, if the situation warrants. Ms. Bailey responded by stating that communication with parents will need to take place so they are aware that conditional approval could be rescinded and the school system would not be financially liable.

The motion made by Mr. Teplitzky and seconded by Mr. Hayden was unanimously approved by the Board.

### INFORMATION

The Board received the following as information:

Minutes of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Special Education meeting, September 10, 2001.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Arnold made the following announcements:

- On Thursday, October 25, 2001, the PTA Council will hold its annual Fall Workshop at 6:00 p.m. at Cockeysville Middle School.
- The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education of Baltimore County will be held on Tuesday, November 6, 2001, at Greenwood. The meeting will begin with an open session at 5:00 p.m. After the Board adjourns to meet in closed session, followed by a brief dinner recess, the open meeting will reconvene at approximately 7:30 p.m. The public is welcome at all open sessions.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Mary Urquhart, a parent representing the Advisory Committee for Alternative Education, described her son's positive experience in the Maryland's Tomorrow program at Chesapeake High School.

Ms. Teresa LaMaster, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Special Education, distributed copies of data taken from the Maryland State Department of Education web site that showed the relationship of achievement between regular education students and special education students. She requested a "rigorous analysis" of the achievement of students with disabilities in Baltimore County Public Schools. Ms. LaMaster asked for another report this school year to look at the achievement with students with disabilities or achievement gaps, in general, looking at trends in several of the cohorts. She asked for a written response to indicate whether such a report would be forthcoming. With regard to the implementation of the elementary reading series, she expressed concern about how the reading series is being implemented in special education.

Mr. Boyd Crouse, Chair of the Southeast Area Educational Advisory Council, thanked the Board for seeking community input on the foreign travel issue. He also echoed Dr. Hayman's thoughts on alignment of our priorities. Mr. Crouse commended the culinary students at Sollers Point/Southeast Technical High School who provided dinner prior to the Southeastern Area pre-budget meeting recently. He also highlighted some of the speakers' concerns voiced at the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)

Ms. Meg O'Hare, Chair of the Northeast Area Educational Advisory Council, commented on the potential of the reading series workbook being used as a parent home/school connection tool. She shared her concern that students might not have a workbook next year, as they do this year. With regard to the number of responses shown for a specific statement on the Parent Involvement Survey (page 16 of *Following the Blueprint for Progress...*), Ms. O'Hare felt there was room for improvement and that, perhaps, the system should look into using an electronic tool for surveying parents on an annual basis, rather than once every two years. Finally, Ms. O'Hare urged the Board to follow Dr. Hairston's leadership with respect to the recommendation on foreign travel.

Mr. Lorinzo Foxworth, a representative of the Minority Achievement Advisory Group (MAAG) spoke about the group's recent activities. The group has set an agenda for the year, and its goals are in sync with Baltimore County Public Schools. MAAG has reviewed the *Student Behavior Handbook* and suggested revisions be considered to eliminate duplication and to clarify other areas. As a member of the High School Assessment Committee, the MAAG representative noted there are many questions that need to be addressed. He asked the Board to continue its emphasis on the achievement gap.

Ms. Laura Nossel, President of the PTA Council of Baltimore County, acknowledged the decrease in PTA membership and noted it does not necessarily indicate a decrease in parent involvement. She stated that national and state dues have increased, but dues have not increased locally. With regard to the key strategies, Ms. Nossel stated she was glad to see a staff development calendar. On the elementary reading series, Ms. Nossel recommended the inclusion of tips or suggestions for parents in school newsletters. She shared her appreciation to the Board for parent and student input on the subject of foreign travel. Referring to the decrease in parent involvement from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school, Ms. Nossel reminded everyone that there are more opportunities for parents to be involved at the high school level through other organizations, such as sports and band, more so than at the middle school level.

Mr. Mark Beytin, President of the Teachers' Association of Baltimore County, noted the efforts of Ms. McMahan and her staff and Deputy Superintendent Johns in addressing concerns and coordinating strategies to help decrease teacher discomfort with the new elementary reading series. He noted that we have reached a turning point in communication and collaboration that signals stronger working relationships in the future. Finally, Mr. Beytin congratulated the teachers and students for their work thus far in improving student achievement and noted there is more to be done, especially in the area of minority achievement.

Noting the absence of speakers to address the proposed revisions to Policy 1230, Mr. Arnold reminded everyone that the Board would vote on the revisions on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)

Mr. George Chiles, a Parkville Middle School parent, urged the Board not to give in to irrational fear, with respect to the foreign travel issue. He noted the value of this experience and asked the Board not to approve a policy based on fear.

Mr. Rodger Janssen spoke about the intent of his comments at previous meetings.

Ms. Kelli Nelson asked for the Board's support for Maryland's Infants and Toddlers Program. She noted that Dr. Grasmick has requested additional funds for this program and made it her third highest priority for the education budget. Ms. Nelson distributed a handout and noted that the State funds less than 2% of the general funding for this program. She further explained that in 2000, more than 20% of infants and toddlers enrolled in this program graduated from the program requiring no additional special education services. Board members were asked to contact the Governor to express their support of this funding.

Ms. Karen Wingard thanked the Board for tabling its vote on the foreign travel issue. She informed the Board her daughter has an overseas trip planned for spring break and reminded everyone that after the Columbine shootings, everyone was encouraged not to let fear rule their lives.

Mr. Scott Jenkins, PTSA President at Perry Hall Middle School, thanked the Board for delaying its vote on the foreign travel recommendation. He noted that in a letter from the national organization, PTA's were urged to keep things normal. Mr. Jenkins urged Board members to allow parents to make the choices for their children.

At 10:55 p.m., Mr. Walker moved to adjourn the open session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jung and approved by the Board.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joe A. Hairston  
Secretary-Treasurer