

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

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## Board of Education

Mrs. Laurie Marchini, President  
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Mrs. Lorelee Farrell  
Mrs. Tammy Fraley  
Mr. Wayne Foote  
Mr. Zachary Sterne, SMOB  
Dr. David Cox, Superintendent

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### **Recognize Carson Scholars**

The school board honored two ACPS first-time Carson Scholars, Benjamin Twigg, a fifth grader at Parkside Elementary School, and Kelsey Darber, a fifth grader at Northeast Elementary School. These selected students will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship award for being named 2017 Carson Scholars.

Each year the Fund recognizes a select group of high achieving students in grades four through eleven who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and humanitarian qualities. Repeat winners are recognized for maintaining high academic standards and strong commitments to their communities.

To celebrate their accomplishments, the Mid-Atlantic scholars will be honored at an Annual Awards Banquet on Sunday, April 30, 2017. For more information, visit the Carson Scholars Fund website at [www.carsonscholars.org](http://www.carsonscholars.org).

### **Recognize Braddock Math Counts State Finalists**

The school board recognized Braddock Middle School's Math Counts team for winning the regional competition and advancing to the State Finals at Johns Hopkins University. This marked the 31<sup>st</sup> time in 33 years of State Competitions that Braddock's team has advanced to the State Finals.

Students recognized included Mitch Septoff, Pia Gupta, Eve Hutcherson, Moss Summerfield, Jacob Litman, Hannah Johnson, Ricky Day, Sofiiia Kucher, and Cole Fiscus. Braddock's team is under the direction of Ray Short and Sheila Greise.

### **Recognize Math Counts Club Member for Performance on**

### **Maryland Math League Exam**

The school board recognized Northeast Elementary School fifth grader, Colin Sheehe, for placing first on the exam given by the Maryland Math League. Colin scored 34 out of 35 participating on a sixth grade test. Colin is also a member of Braddock's Math Counts team.

### **Recognize MPSSAA 1A Boys Indoor Pole Vault Champion**

The school board recognized Carter Nave, a senior at Allegany High School, for being the MPSSAA 1A Boys Indoor Pole Vault Champion. Carter will attend Mount St. Mary's in the fall having received a full scholarship for pole vaulting. He is coached by Denny Salas.

### **Recognize Winner of Making Strides School Challenge**

Katelyn Mock, Senior Community Manager for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, presented Westernport Elementary School with an award for winning the 2016 School Challenge by raising a total of \$1,540.81 for the American Cancer Society. The award was presented to Westernport principal, Alexa Fazenbaker, and teacher, Julie Kyle.

Other participating schools/ACPS organizations included the Board of Education's Central Office, Northeast Elementary School, Mountain Ridge High School, Parkside Elementary School, Westmar Middle School, John Humbird Elementary School, Frost Elementary School, the Fort Hill High School Sentinelettes, Bel Air Elementary School, and Cresaptown Elementary School.

### **Introduce Allegany County Teacher of the Year**

The school board recognized Dr. Matthew Ravenscroft, teacher at Mountain Ridge

High School, for being selected as the 2017-2018 Allegany County Teacher of the Year. Matthew has a Doctor of Education from Frostburg State University, a Master of Arts in Secondary Education Degree and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from West Virginia University. Currently an AP U.S. Government and Politics and Historical Research Methods teacher, he has led his classes in the collection and use of more than 100 local oral histories. Dr. Ravenscroft has advised in the creation of seven documentaries using oral histories so that the lived experiences of local citizens will not be lost.

Matthew will now join other local Teachers of the Year as a candidate for the Maryland Teacher of the Year.

### **Present Proclamation Recognizing April as Library Media Month**

The school board presented a proclamation to Mrs. Lisa Stevenson, ACPS Coordinator of Library Media, recognizing April as School Library Media Month. The library media program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The library media specialist's role is to provide the leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school.

The school board has entrusted the library media specialist in each school to teach the skills of locating and using information through traditional resources and new technologies, to provide literature appreciation activities,

and to guide and encourage content and recreational reading to every student. Lifelong learning begins and is systematically developed through the library media curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools. The library media program contributes to the individual growth and development of all students, while fostering both excellence and equity in education.

### **Legislative Update**

Dr. Cox updated the school board on several legislative items as Sine Die was on April 10<sup>th</sup>. A number of updates come in the final hours of the session, of which the superintendent will detail in a more complete report in May. One of the bills that passed was legislation that would limit the amount of testing allowed within a given school year. The MSEA was in favor of this bill's passage. PSSAM was opposed. Dr. Cox explained that almost all of the assessments given in ACPS are done in order to comply with some statutory law or requirement issued by the federal or state government. Dr. Cox also finds it ironic that in a year in which legislation such as this is passed, the General Assembly has also required yet another assessment for middle school students in Social Studies. The school system did, however, receive good news of additional funding for FY18.

## WORK SESSION NOTABLES

### **Maintenance and Construction Update**

ACPS Director of Facilities, Mr. Vince Montana, updated the school board on various ongoing or upcoming maintenance and construction projects. They are as follows:

- **Allegany High School:** The contractor is continuing to pour concrete floors in area B and laying concrete block in section B. The concrete floors in section C are complete. Electrical conduits and plumbing in section C, including the shops, cafeteria and kitchen are being installed. They have begun backfilling the retaining wall adjacent to Lion's Center. ACPS has agreed to purchase fill material to back fill the wall to expedite its completion. The steel is being erected for section B and the office suite and main hall in section A. Construction of the interior walls in section C is progressing as most of the partitions on the first and second levels are complete. Framing of the exterior walls is in progress along with the exterior sheathing. Block work is progressing in the auditorium and locker rooms as well. Most of the roof trusses will be placed after the roof joists for the auxiliary gym are placed. The sub contractor has begun installation of the roofing material on section C. They work every possible day, including Saturdays. Installation of ductwork and drywall cannot proceed until the roof is weather tight. ACPS staff continues to work with the contractor and architect on a plan to temporarily reroute traffic to the Lion's Center during construction of the new road from Bishop Walsh Drive to the Lion's Center and the teachers' parking area.
- **FY 2018 CIP:** The IAC will make final recommendations on April 20<sup>th</sup>, and the BPW will approve the final allocations after May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **ASP:** The PSCP has issued the application forms for the FY 2018 ASP funds. Staff is planning to apply for projects in the near future, which will include the Frost Roof Replacement Project and other priority projects as funding allows.
- **Maintenance Department:** Work has begun on the roof

replacement of the carriage house at the Central Office. Staff has completed the enrollment projections for the Master Plan for School Facilities, which is due to the State in June.

### **Blue Ribbon Commission**

The school board and superintendent adopted goals for the 2016-2017 school year that included a goal "to increase efficiency in the way we operate our schools". Part of that effort is to form a Blue Ribbon Commission of community leaders, including those outside of education to study the needs of the school system, make recommendations to the school board and county commissioners and develop a charge statement for the group.

Dr. Cox shared a revised draft charge for the Blue Ribbon Commission after last month's discussion. "The charge of the Allegany County Board of Education's Blue Ribbon Commission shall be to provide the Board's consultant with relative and important information and perspectives regarding the task of adjusting attendance boundaries for more efficient and effective utilization of school capacity, so that the consultant may deliver a plan to recommend school attendance boundaries, the number of elementary schools for the county, and report its recommendations to the board at the completion of its work."

The Blue Ribbon Commission composition shall include, at minimum:

- 4 parents of elementary students whose children attend schools in different parts of the county
- 2 elementary school administrators
- 2 elementary school teachers
- 3 community and/or business representatives

Commission members may apply to serve or may be nominated. The superintendent will develop and solicit Requests for Proposals for consulting services and recommend a

## WORK SESSION NOTABLES CONT.

consultant for board approval who will facilitate the work fulfilling the board's charge of the Blue Ribbon Commission. All meetings will be open to the public.

### ***Instruction-Lead Higher Schools***

Dr. Stephen Thompson, ACPS Supervisor of Mathematics, gave a presentation to the school board regarding the Equal Opportunity Schools Lead Higher initiative, which is an effort to increase the enrollment and performance of underrepresented students in the Advanced Placement (AP) program at Fort Hill High School.

Fort Hill was selected for this initiative because it is the only comprehensive high school in the system in which more than 50% of the student population is considered underrepresented. At 38%, Fort Hill has the lowest percentage of juniors and seniors taking and AP course, which is 10% lower than at Mountain Ridge and 14% lower than at Allegany. Based on 2015-2016 data, Fort Hill had both the lowest number of AP exams taken and the lowest percentage of AP exams earning a passing score for juniors and seniors. 13% of the underrepresented juniors and seniors enrolled in an AP course passed the AP exam.

Lead Higher will help determine the causes of AP participation gaps at Fort Hill and develop strategies for closing those gaps. Lead Higher will also provide support for district implementation of these strategies and for the sustainability of strategies to ensure ongoing student success.

The cost to ACPS for the implementation of this initiative at Fort Hill is \$17,000. Funding to cover this cost was identified through an excess available in the dropout prevention program. A grant, which supplemented this program, covered the costs for services. District and school-based administration would be charged with working in conjunction with Equal Opportunity Schools to develop and implement strategies targeted for recruitment and retention of underrepresented students in AP courses.

Strategies that were shown to be successful at improving AP recruitment and retention at Fort Hill could be replicated at the other comprehensive high schools by ACPS staff.

### ***Budget Update***

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Financial Officer, updated the school board on the FY 2018 budget. The request to county government totaled \$1,138,737, which was a 2% increase over last year's appropriation and a 1.2% increase over Maintenance of Effort. This still leaves the school system needing to fill an approximate \$1.1 million gap. The school system learned recently that it will be receiving \$793,472 in additional state aid, which will go a long way in balancing the budget, leaving a gap of \$345,275. Allegany County Commissioner president, Jake Shade, indicated that he would be amenable to a 1.1% increase over MOE, which would add approximately \$90,000 to the school system's budget. In the end, the school board would still need to find a way to come up with the approximate \$255,000 deficit.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### ***Consider Second Reading of Policy for Attendance Policy (File: JED)***

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is "to define the school system student attendance policy."

The policy states: "Regular school attendance is expected of all students in ACPS. School attendance is directly related to school achievement. In order to maximize academic achievement, there must be a unified effort by all school staff, parents, students, and the community to improve overall school attendance. School administrators, teachers, and support staff are expected to make all reasonable attempts to assist students and parents in addressing those factors which cause students to be absent from school."

### ***Consider Approval of Blue Ribbon Committee Charge and Composition***

The school board voted to approve the Blue Ribbon Committee Charge and Composition that was discussed in detail during the Work Session.

### ***Consider Approval of Equal Opportunity Schools – Lead Higher Initiative***

A motion to approve the Equal Opportunity Schools Lead Higher Initiative failed to be made, thus removing this from the agenda for consideration.

## CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for March 21, 2017, Work Session and Business Meeting.
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of March 1-31, 2017.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of March 1-31, 2017.
4. Receive information technology report for the period of March 1-31, 2017.
5. Receive Monthly Financial Report.

The school board approved the consent agenda.

## NEW BUSINESS

### ***Consider First Reading of Policy for Academic and Conduct Standards for Participation in Athletics Policy (File: JJIC)***

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to express the academic and conduct standards for student athletes.”

The policy states: “Participation in athletics is regarded as an important privilege for students. Participation in such activities support students’ personal growth and achievement. It also gives students the opportunity to be representatives of their schools. Therefore, students who desire to participate in athletics shall be expected and required to meet minimum academic and conduct standards. Failure to meet minimum academic and conduct standards will result in a student losing the privilege of athletic participation.”

### ***Consider First Reading of Policy for Student Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Intimidation, Violence Policy (File: JBA)***

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to state the Board’s position regarding student harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, intimidation, or violence.”

The policy states: “The ACPS System will maintain a learning environment that is free from any type of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, violence, or hate crimes based on an individual’s religion, race, ethnicity, region, language, gender, national origin, disability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or age.”

### ***Consider First Reading of Policy for Technology Responsible Use by Employees (File: GBM)***

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is to “establish the foundation for responsible use of technology equipment, software, systems, and networks in ACPS for ACPS employees.”

### ***Vote to Meet in Executive Session in May***

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, May 9, 2017, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The meetings will be held at the Center for Career and Technology Education in the auditorium.

## CONSTITUENTS’ COMMENTS

### ***Mr. Evan West, ACEA UniServe Director***

Mr. West addressed the school board to encourage close consultation with staff, especially classroom teachers, to make informed decisions as a way to help boost employee morale. ACEA also offered to collaborate with the school board to form local testing committees as a result of the Less Testing, More Learning Act of 2017.

### ***Mr. Wesley Mason***

Mr. Mason addressed the school board regarding the possibility of after school program cuts as a result of the President’s budget. Mr. Mason attended an after school program during his younger years and couldn’t stress enough how valuable it was to him. While there he was fed, mentored, cared for, and safe, and he hopes that the ACPS school board will do everything in their power to ensure that after school programs in this county remain.

## UPDATES FROM THE SMOB

Zach updated the school board on the following:

- ACASC held its elections for members of the Executive Board for the 2017-2018 school year. The SMOB-Elect is Alexis Lashbaugh of Allegany High School
- During the elections, ACASC held a small “Ice Bucket Challenge” fundraiser to benefit ALS and were successful in raising a total of \$149.06 for the cause.
- Allegany County recently hosted the annual MASC Convention in Ocean City, Maryland.