

BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY ACPS PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Crystal Bender, President
Mr. Robert Farrell, Vice President
Mrs. Debra Frank
Mrs. Tammy Fraley
Dr. David Bohn
Mr. Jeff Blank, Superintendent
Ms. Brooklyne Noel, SMOB

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognition of Homecoming Players

The school board recognized Fort Hill High School football players, Anthony Palmisano and Bryce Schadt, as the Defensive and Offensive Players of the annual Homecoming game, respectively. Bryce finished the game with four carries for 44 yards, three first downs and a touchdown. He also went seven for ten passing for 70 yards and a touchdown pass. Anthony finished the game with two tackles and two interceptions. Both players wanted to dedicate their awards to their teammate, Saiquan Jenkins, who passed away two days prior to the game. Fort Hill's head coach, Zachary Alkire, and Fort Hill principal, Mrs. Candy Canan, were also in attendance for the recognition.

Recognition of Allegany High School Band

The school board recognized the Allegany High School band for winning the school's first ever Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast High School Marching Band Championship. Allegany led all Group 1 Open bands with a score of 96.50 and captured all of the caption awards, including Best Music, Best Visual, Best Auxiliary, and Best Percussion. Allegany's band director, Mr. Larry Jackson, accepted the recognition on behalf of the band. Mr. Jeff Avey, ACPS Coordinator of Fine Arts, was also in attendance for the recognition.

Recognize Golf Student

The school board recognized Allegany High School senior, Darian Bauer, for placing 13th in the 1A/2A State Championship in golf. Allegany's head golf coach, Brandon Reed, and Allegany's principal, Mrs. Heidi Laupert, were also in attendance for the recognition.

Recognize Cross Country Student

The school board recognized Mountain Ridge High School junior, Mary Delaney, who placed 4th in the 1A State Cross Country meet. Mountain Ridge's head coach, Doug Baker, and Mountain Ridge principal, Mr. Danny Carter, were also in attendance for the recognition.

State Championship Winners

The school board recognized the Fort Hill High School varsity football team for winning the Maryland Class 1A State Championship. The sentinels defeated Mountain Ridge High School 51-31 to win the school's 8th state championship title. The Sentinels finished their regular season 12-0, and outscored their opponents 506-152 and only trailed for a total of seven minutes all season. Coach Alkire congratulated the Mountain Ridge Miners on a great game and season as well as Allegany's football team for their season. When the final rankings for Maryland were released, Allegany County had the top three teams in Class 1A.

At the conclusion of the athletic recognitions, Mr. Blank also thanked Mrs. Tracey Leonard, ACPS Supervisor of Athletics, for her hard work this season to ensure that athletic events were able to take place under COVID restrictions.

Delay/Snow Day Closures Update

Mr. Mark Morral, ACPS Supervisor of Transportation, provided the school board with an update on the school system's procedures for school delays and closings due to inclement weather. ACPS does not have a bare road policy. The transportation department utilizes three staff members to survey road conditions in the county. Each one monitors the road surface conditions, road temperatures, and air temperatures and then report findings back to the department. The supervisor is in contact with the county roads division to monitor the start times for the road crews in the area and checks the weather forecast using various outlets to monitor incoming conditions. The supervisor also consults with neighboring counties to evaluate the potential impacts of inclement weather. This is all done prior to 5:00 a.m., and by 5:15 a.m. the Superintendent is informed so that he can make a decision to delay or close schools. The ACPS Public Information Officer is notified if parents and staff need to be alerted to a delay or closure.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for meetings held on November 9, 2021
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of November 1-30, 2021.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of November 1-30, 2021.
4. Receive monthly IT report for November and December
5. Receive monthly financial report

Updates are available via the Blackboard notification system, the ACPS website, social media pages, and the local media. Decisions to close schools the night before must be made by 7:30 p.m. Two-hour delays will be re-evaluated, and a decision will be made by 7:00 a.m. if a closure is necessary. Three-hour delays will be re-evaluated by 8:00 a.m. if a closure is necessary. All possible attempts will be made to make the best decision possible to eliminate sending out multiple updates. Early dismissal decisions due to inclement weather will be made by 11:00 a.m. Mr. Blank reminded parents that if they ever feel uncomfortable with the school system's decision to open or delay schools, the choice is ultimately theirs whether or not to send their children to school during inclement weather.

Enrollment Update

Mrs. Nil Grove, ACPS Chief IT Officer, provided the school board with an update on enrollment. Statics as of November 30, 2021, are as follows:

- Overall Students (including Pre-K): 8,437 (2020); 8,075 (2021); 8,132 (2022)
- Pre-K Enrollment: 455 (2020); 322 (2021); 439 (2022)
- Total K-12 Enrollment: 7,982 (2020); 7,743 (2021); 7,693 (2022)
- Paid FTE: 7,955.25 (2020); 7,677.75 (2021); 7,649.5 (2022)

Mrs. Grove noted that MSDE does not pay for part-time pre-k students. Part-time students count for 1 FTE if taking four or more classes; .25 FTE for one class; .5 FTE for two classes; .75 FTE for three classes. There are 28.5 part-time students in ACPS for 2022. Dual Enrollment is 4.5 FTE and PTECH is 3.5 FTE. There were three students who were ineligible based on immunization disqualification, however, MSDE will pay for these students this year based on an exclusion. There were also four students with non-attendance, for which ACPS will not get paid.

Next Generation Scholars Update

Mr. Leonard Webb, ACPS Coordinator of the Next Generation Scholars program, provided the school board with an update. He provided the following statistics as a result of a student survey:

- In 2020, 76% of students said they were aware of the connection between their grades and the college of their choice, and in 2021 that number increased to 83%.
- In 2020, 80% of students said that they acknowledge at least one adult advocate in their lives, and in 2021 that number increased to 92%.

Next Generation Scholars at the Career Center have the highest overall GPA of 3.03 of all of their counterparts, both in and out of the program, which is a good indicator of students being prepared and ready to learn upon arriving at CCTE. Last year the students were able to complete mock interviews and financial literacy lessons as well as some other educational experiences. Over the summer there was 27% participation in service-learning hours thanks to the Dapper Dans Club, the Children's Adaptive Sports League, HRDC, the Cumberland City Police, the YMCA, the Children's League, and Jane's Place, who all provided summer learning opportunities for students.

This year, HB 1244 approved an appropriation of \$5 million for the program, and in 2024 that funding will become permanent. This funding will help Allegany County's program with recruitment efforts, which have already begun. Next school year, the NGS program will be back in the middle school as well.

Screening Process

Mr. Steve Wilson, ACPS Supervisor of HR, provided the school board with an update on the screening process for vaccination information. The federal OSHA passed an emergency temporary standard (ETS) on November 5, 2021, which was designed to protect unvaccinated employees and requires employers of 100+ employees to require their employees to provide proof of being fully-vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit a plan for weekly testing of unvaccinated employees as well as require them to wear face masks. This plan is to be in place by January 4, 2022. On November 12, 2021, the ACPS HR department began the first step in complying with the ETS by asking permanent employees to complete a survey stating their vaccination status and uploading to a secure site their vaccination records. This information is necessary in order to implement a plan for weekly testing of unvaccinated employees and to comply with the ETS.

Late in the day on November 12th, the ETS was stayed in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit. The 6th Circuit now has jurisdiction over the ETS. The Department of Labor has filed a motion to lift the stay, but this is still in litigation to date. ACPS is in the process of developing a policy, also required by the ETS, in order to be prepared with a plan should the ETS survive its current legal battles. 100% of permanent employees have complied with the survey, and ACPS will continue to collect information from part-time employees to be in compliance with the ETS.

Vaccine Update

Mr. Blank provided the school board with a vaccine update from the Allegany County Health Department. ACPS, in conjunction with the health department, offered after school vaccination clinics at South Penn, Mountain Ridge, Cresaptown, Flintstone, Westernport, and Braddock for students ages 5-11. 356 students participated and received their vaccines. Countywide in that age group, 565 students have received their vaccines as of December 3rd. ACPS also offer booster clinics for employees at these same school locations, and a total of 319 staff members received their booster. In Allegany County, 34.2% of students ages 12-17 are fully vaccinated, and 39.2% have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Consider First Reading of School Safety and Security Policy (File: ECAE)

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to provide safe, orderly, and caring learning environments in which all students feel comfortable in adherence to the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018.” The policy states, “All members of the educational community share the responsibility for maintaining a positive and secure school setting. To this end, the Board of Education of Allegany County is authorized and empowered to employ School Security Employees to work in cooperation with system administrators, and in conjunction with the existing School Resource Officers, employed through other local law enforcement agencies, to enhance the day-to-day safety and security of all school facilities, faculty, staff, and students.”

Review of Regulations for School Safety and Security Policy (File: ECAE-R)

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session January 11, 2022, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on January 11, 2022, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The time and location of the meeting is TBD.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Second Reading of Parent/Guardian Observation of Students Policy (File: KB)

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to present guidelines for parent/guardian observations.” The policy states, “The Board of Education of Allegany County encourages parent/guardian participation in the education process. Observations by parents and guardians are permitted, so long as the observations do not interfere with the learning environment of the privacy of other students.”

SMOB & BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Ms. Brooklyne Noel, Student Member of the Board

Ms. Noel provided the following updates to the school board regarding the Allegany County Association of Student Councils:

- ACASC held a General Assembly at Mountain Ridge the same night as the school board meeting, so Ms. Noel was unable to attend.
- The ACASC Executive Board is currently making plans for the remainder of the school year, including the intention to attend both a Cumberland and Frostburg City Council meeting.
- ACASC is partnering with Allegany College of Maryland to plan a Youth Leadership Summit for the spring.
- Several members of ACASC had the opportunity to attend the MASC Fall Leadership Conference, which is a great chance to network with other student council members from across the state.
- ACASC hopes to participate in more community service projects this year.
- Ms. Noel commended the student athletes that were successful in earning state championships, titles, or who were successful in participating in athletic events at that level. She is looking forward to the winter sports season and hopes to see more students advance to state-level competitions.

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank took the opportunity to thank teachers, staff, and students for managing all of the COVID policies and regulations. She noted that our students are often more resilient than adults are in the face of these challenges. Mrs. Frank encouraged people to get vaccinated and wished everyone a happy holiday and a safe and healthy new year.

CONSTITUENTS' COMMENTS

Ms. Carrie Wolford, Parent

Ms. Wolford addressed the school board regarding the mask requirement for students. Her comments can be heard in their entirety beginning at the 44:35-minute mark of the recorded video.