

BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY ACPS PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Mrs. Tammy Fraley
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Ms. Brooklyne Noel, SMOB

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Present Proclamation Recognizing February as African American History Month

The school board presented a proclamation to Ms. Tifani Fisher, President of the Allegany County Branch 7007 of the NAACP, recognizing February 2022 as African American History Month. ACPS is committed to honoring African Americans and recognizing their contributions and accomplishments to the history and culture of the United States. The school board believes that it is appropriate to reflect this commitment in a proper and concrete fashion, as an important month of remembrance, recognition, and education as well as to raise awareness about issues still present in society.

Present Proclamation Recognizing February 7-11, 2022, as National School Counseling Week

The school board presented a proclamation to Dr. Sarah Welsh, ACPS Coordinator of School Counselors, recognizing February 7-11, 2022, as National School Counseling Week by the American School Counselor Association. School counselors are employed in public schools to help students achieve success in school, reach their full potential, and set realistic goals for themselves. They are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development. School counselors also help parents focus on ways to further the educational, personal, and social growth of their children, and they work with teachers and other educators to warrant counseling programs meet school goals. School counselors seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society, and they play a vital role in helping to ensure students learn to have respectful conversations in a safe school environment.

Present Proclamation Recognizing February as Career and Technical Education Month

The school board presented a proclamation to Mr. Joe Brewer, ACPS Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, recognizing February as Career and Technical Education Month as designated by the Association for Career and Technical Education. CTE offers students the opportunity to gain the academic, technical, and employability skills necessary for true career readiness. Students will participate in authentic meaningful experiences that improve the quality of their education and increase their engagement and achievement. Providing students with career exploration opportunities earlier in their educational experience, which enables them to make informed and beneficial decisions about their academic coursework and pursue established programs of study and career pathways. Leaders from business and industry nationwide report increasing challenges related to addressing the skills gap and connecting qualified professionals with available careers in critical and growing CTE-related fields, including healthcare, energy, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and information technology. Preparing students for these and other fulfilling careers by offering integrated programs of study that link secondary and postsecondary education and lead to attainment of industry-recognized credentials, CTE programs ensure that employers have access to a qualified and thriving workforce, thus ensuring that America is a strong and competitive economy.

New Early Childhood Center and Full-Day Pre-K Update

Mrs. Debbie Metheny, ACPS Supervisor of Student Services, provided the school board with an update on a pre-kindergarten expansion grant and the state pre-kindergarten program. The results of an analysis on the long-term effects of Maryland's public pre-k programs indicate that enrollment in the program has a positive effect on the participants' school performance through elementary and middle school. The findings also suggest that participation in pre-k programs significantly reduces the number of children who were identified as having disabilities or placement in special education.

ACPS is currently in meeting the requirements of the pre-k expansion grant. During FY2023-FY2025, requirements will need to be met as will the requirements for the Blueprint Transitional

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for meetings held on January 11, 2022, and on January 18, 2022.
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of January 1-31, 2022.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of January 1-31, 2022.
4. Receive monthly IT report
5. Receive monthly financial report

Program. Blueprint structural elements will need to be in place by FY2026.

In ACPS during FY17-FY22, a full-day program was added at South Penn Elementary. In FY21-FY22, a full day program was added at George's Creek Elementary, with one half-day session remaining; half-day sessions went to full day sessions at Westernport Elementary; and half-day sessions changed to one full day session at Flintstone Elementary. Additionally, in FY22, half-day sessions changed to one full day program at Mt. Savage, Cresaptown, and John Humbird Elementary Schools. Collaboration with Head Start partners has occurred throughout the expansion process and will continue to occur with early learning partners as ACPS moves forward.

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School systems may participate in a free full-day program for 3- and 4-year-olds who are from families that are below 300% of the Tier I in FY23-FY25. Beginning in FY26, school systems may participate in a full-day program for 4-year-olds between 300-600% of the Tier II and above 600% of the Tier III. School systems may choose to collect the family share using the State Sliding Scale. School systems may provide high-quality learning experiences to help children develop and maintain the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to be successful in school. School systems may also provide appropriate experiences that address the needs of young children in the areas of language and literacy, math, social foundations, science, social studies, fine arts, and physical well-being and motor development.

School systems must continue to provide access of a minimum of a half-day pre-k program to all families of 4-year-olds who are economically disadvantaged. They may participate in the Pre-K Expansion Grant Program in FY23-FY25; may participate in the Maryland State Pre-K Program; may receive Transitional Blueprint Program funding in FY23-FY25; and may receive Blueprint Program and funding in FY26-FY30.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires a mixed delivery system of eligible public providers (early learning programs that are provided by county boards at public schools that meet the requirements and wish to participate) and eligible private providers (community-based programs licensed in the state that meet the requirements and wish to participate).

ACPS will continue with the current full-day Pre-K 4 programs at South Penn, John Humbird, Flintstone, Cresaptown, and Mt. Savage Elementary Schools in FY23. All of these programs will be eligible to receive Blueprint funding. Additionally, Cash Valley Elementary will change from two half-day sessions to one full-day program; Frost Elementary will change from one half-day session to one, possibly two, full-day programs; all early learning classes from Westernport and George's Creek Elementary Schools will be held at the Westmar Early Learning Center. This early learning center will serve as a hub for early childhood programs for both communities and will include: 2-3 full-day pre-k 4 programs; one pre-k 3 programs (2 half-day sessions); one partner classroom for students who require extensive IEP supports; a sensory room; Judy Center offices and a family engagement room; an Infant and Toddler Office for birth to age 5 service providers; and Head Start.

INSTRUCTIONAL & FINANCE UPDATES

Adjustment to School Calendar

At the school board's November 2021 meeting, they voted to make Monday, March 21, 2022, a 3-hour delayed opening to allow for supervisor staff development and teacher planning time. The school board voted again at this meeting to move this staff development and teacher planning time to Tuesday, February 22, 2022. Schools are already scheduled to be closed that day for virtual parent conferences, and will now also allow for staff development and teacher work time. March 21, 2022, will now go back to a FULL DAY of instruction for students.

Programs of Study

Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, ACPS Chief Academic Officer, provided the school board with an update on the ACPS Programs of Study. As part of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the goal is to increase CTE courses, which is also a Board goal, dual enrollment courses, and advanced placement options. ACPS is trying to be proactive and innovative in its decision-making regarding ways to increase opportunities for students and meet Blueprint goals. All of the high school programs of study changes have been vetted through the district Curriculum Committee, which includes input and participation from ACM, FSU, and other ACPS stakeholders.

ACPS added an Agricultural Science completer entitled Agricultural Sciences and Operations. There has been good enrollment for the AG semester courses, and ACPS believes that the AG completer will be successful as well. This completer is three credits, and a decision will be made in the next several years whether or not to add a work-based learning component or a dual enrollment AG course to this program. Through an AG completer program, students have one or more pathways to meet graduation requirements. For graduation, students must have either two credits in the same World Language or three or more credits in a state-approved CTE program. MSDE eliminated the Advanced Technology pathway as a completer option for students beginning in Grade 9 of the 2021-2022 school year.

ACPS added an Advanced Technology CTE completer in the area of Engineering Design and Processes. It is a three-credit completer course and provides another pathway for students to meet graduation requirements. ACPS is offering a college level Sociology course which is a general education requirement for most majors. ACPS is offering a Principles of Macroeconomics as a dual enrollment course. It will only be offered online due to staffing. The goal is to increase the number of seniors who opt to take an elective semester business course.

ACPS has also partnered with Allegany College of Maryland to offer students another innovative opportunity modeled after the P-TECH program. Mr. Joe Brewer, ACPS Supervisor for CTE, provided the school board with a broader look at this new program. Beginning with a student's junior year, they will now have the opportunity to receive industry standard certifications and college credits at the state-of-the-art Western Maryland Works Makerspace in LaVale. Upon finishing high school, students will complete 36 college credits in Automated Technology Engineering; earn thirteen National Institute of Metalworking Skills certifications; and be recognized by the state with CTE completer certification in Manufacturing Engineering Technology.

The course sequence for this program is as follows:

- Junior Year (fall): Machine Tool Application; Quality Control w/Geometric Dimensions and Tolerances; Introduction to Computer-Aided Design
- Junior Year (spring): Mill Application; Lathe Applications; Advanced Computer-Aided Design
- Senior Year (fall): Intro CNC Programming and Machining; Abrasive Machining and Heat Transfer; Fixture and Design Fabrication
- Senior Year (spring): Advanced CNC Programming and Machining; Robotics Material Handling and Automation; Electrical Discharge Machine

ACM has established workforce development partnerships with local and regional employers for employment after the program completion. Some of these partnerships include BSI, Northrop Grumman, and National Jet Company, Inc. Students interested in continuing their education can seamlessly transfer to a 4-year institution to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Materials Engineering, or Manufacturing Engineering. Manufacturing Engineering Technicians improve manufacturing processes to raise product quality and profitability. They plan, test, and custom-make industrial products while assisting engineers in implementing improvements in production and output. Manufacturing career pathways include production, development, maintenance, quality, logistics, and health, safety and environmental. The median wage for a MET in Maryland is \$73,900.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Manufacturing Engineering Technology CNC Programming and Operations skill should visit an Open House on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 6 p.m. at the Western Maryland Works Makerspace.

Budget Priorities

The school board approved the following 2023 Board Budget Priorities:

- Make every effort to modernize current student programs and associated equipment and curriculum needs based on student interest and enrollment with a focus on current and future Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with focus on potential changes in regulations and policies established by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Utilizing appropriate CARES and Blueprint funding, maintain and enhance availability and support of technological needs both within the classroom and at home. In addition, continue to provide robust educational recovery programs throughout the school year and during the summer to include recovery of learning loss and food service availability across all grade levels.
- Maintain and enhance student safety and mental health by providing licensed mental health and/or social worker support based upon demonstrated student need and increasing school safety where possible considering local law enforcement recommendations and the Maryland Center for School Safety Policies and Regulations.
- Make every effort to provide employees with negotiated benefits, including salary and health insurance benefits that incorporates changes established by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and give raises where possible.
- Establish additional resources and programs for early childhood development (i.e., universal pre-K) utilizing additional funding streams and re-allocation of facilities where possible.

DRAFT State Aid

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, provided the school board with a review of FY2023 draft state aid as well as budget considerations. State aid categories include the following: foundation programs, transportation grants, compensatory education, English learners, special education, guaranteed tax base, Blueprint Transition Grant program, college and career readiness program, concentration of poverty, transitional supplemental instruction, pre-kindergarten, and teacher salary career ladder. Wealth is used to gauge a county's ability to fund school activities based upon its own resources. The formula is intended to be a wealth equalizer between certain state and local resources for education. School district wealth is formula-driven and takes into account the following measures: 50% of the personal property base; 100% of the net taxable income base; and 40% of the real property base. Allegany County currently ranks 22nd in terms of pupil wealth, so the majority of its educational aid comes from state sources.

District wealth impacts several aid categories and is computed on a per pupil basis and compared to the state average. Therefore, enrollment has a direct impact on state aid. Allegany County had a K-12 enrollment decline of 54.25 students, or a reduction of 0.70%. Total enrollment was 7,661.50. The number of students who qualify for free and reduced meals dropped by 3.81%, or 151 students, to 3,816 or 49.81% of K-12 enrollment. The number of special education students decreased by 76 students to 1,173 or 6.08%. Special education is now 15.31% of K-12 enrollment. The state's overall enrollment decreased by 5,911.25 to 848,653 or 0.69% from last year's total of 854,564.25.

The FY2023 state aid for Allegany County is \$94,039,592. FY2023 budget considerations are as follows: the impact of COVID on learning and reduction of learning gaps from COVID; pending negotiations with bargaining units; from a legislative standpoint, PSSAM and MABE are monitoring several bills which could potentially impact school system finances; and whether or not Blueprint implementation milestones will be delayed by the Accountability and Implementation Board and to what extent.

Consider Repealing of Student Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Intimidation, and Violence Policy (File: JBA)

In December, the state Board of Education issued a new model bullying, harassment, and intimidation policy and required all local school systems to develop their own policy following this model by February 2022. ACPS currently has a policy, file JBA, that is in need of substantial changes in order to meet the state's requirement. Since just amending their current policy would be too difficult, the policy committee has recommended that the school board vote to repeal the current policy and simultaneously replace it with a new one (see below). The school board voted unanimously in a second reading to repeal this policy.

Consider Second Reading of Hiring and Promotions Policy (File: GCD)

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is "to provide for the hiring and promotion of all classes of employees." The policy states, "The BOE shall employ individuals in the positions the Board considers necessary for the operation of the school system. In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall recommend, and the Board shall approve, all certified personnel and the Superintendent shall appoint all non-certified personnel."

Consider Second Reading of Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Policy (File: JBA)

The school board approved the second 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, "All students have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The Board is committed to providing a safe, productive, and inclusive learning environment. Bullying problems are symptomatic of relationship problems best addressed holistically by students, schools, parents/caregivers, and the entire community. ACPS school be places where students are surrounded by caring adults who encourage students to treat others with kindness and empathy, while helping to build a relationship-focused, welcoming, supportive school environment fostering academic and personal growth for every student."

NEW BUSINESS

Vote to Approve New Early Childhood Center and Full-Day Pre-K

The school board voted unanimously to approve the New Early Childhood Center and full-day pre-k program as highlighted under Instructional Updates.

Guideline Recommendation

The school board heard an update from Mrs. Tracey Leonard, ACPS Supervisor of Health, PE, and Athletics, regarding quarantine guidelines for athletics. There is no change in the current quarantine protocols for a person who tests positive for COVID-19 as they may return to play on day 11 as long as they are symptom free. A fully-vaccinated person, or a person who was positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days, who is a close contact of a positive person (within 6-feet for a cumulative time of fifteen minutes), will not need to quarantine as long as they are symptom free, and students involved in athletics may continue to play. An unvaccinated person who is a close contact of a positive person must quarantine, five days from their last exposure, and may return to school on the 6th day as long as they are symptom free the entire length of quarantine. Students involved in athletics may take a PCR test on day five, and those athletes may return to play when they receive a negative test result. Proof of the negative test must be sent in to the school. If a student does not take a PCR test, they may return to play on day eleven as long as they are symptom free. Additionally, all spectators at the basketball finals, which are being held at the University of Maryland's Xfinity Center on March 10-12, 2022, will need to show proof of vaccination for entry.

Budget Amendment

At the school board meeting on January 18, 2022, the Board approved the bid from Baltimore Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$4,881,000 for renovation work at Greenway Avenue Stadium. The project as approved replaces the visitors' bleachers, replaces the existing track with an 8-lane track, and includes the excavating work for retaining walls and additional drainage. ACPS is requested a budget amendment in the amount of \$3,500,000 to defray the costs of this project. These funds will increase the Capital Outlay line item and become part of the School Construction Fund. The Greenway Avenue stadium committee has procured grants totaling \$1,500,000, and their hope is that there may be other local project participation that would further reduce the cost of this project for ACPS. The recommendation would serve to increase the district's unrestricted FY22 budget from \$118,440,696 to \$121,940,696. The funds to appropriate for this project will come from the district's fund balance. The school board unanimously approved this budget amendment. The County Commissioners will also need to approve this amendment request since it will alter the previously approved budget.

Capital Improvement Project – Project Priority

Mr. Larry McKenzie recommended to the school board that they approve a letter to Mr. Robert Gorrell, Executive Director of the Interagency Commission on School Construction, requesting the following changes to the priority order of the ACPS FY2023 Capital Improvement Program:

1. Braddock Middle School – Elevator Installation
2. Braddock Middle School – Upgrade Main Electrical Service
3. Washington Middle School – Upgrade Main Electrical Service
4. Northeast Elementary School – Roof Replacement
5. Cash Valley Elementary School – Replace Air Handler No. 2
6. Beall Elementary School – Exterior Doors and Windows Replacement

7. Beall Elementary School – Replace Chiller

The school board voted unanimously to have Mr. Blank sent this letter reprioritizing the above listed projects.

Consider School Board Communication Policy

The school board approved the above policy, whose purpose is “to prescribe how the Board and individual Board members communicate with the public and employees.” The policy states, “The Board believes that open communication is essential for the effective operation of the school system. The Board will ensure that its members have knowledge of the communications directed to it from the public and the employees. Both the Board and individual Board members have a responsibility to communicate effectively and honestly with the public. Individual Board members have no authority except when participating in a legally convened meeting of the Board or vested in special authority by Board action.”

Review Regulations for Hiring and Promotions Policy (File: GCD)

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy, File: GCD.

Review Regulations for Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Policy (File: JBA)

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy, File: JBA.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session March 8, 2022, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on March 8, 2022, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The time and location of the meeting is TBD.

SMOB AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Ms. Brooklyn Noel, Student Member of the Board

Ms. Noel updated the school board on the following:

- The Allegany County Association of Student Councils held their first General Assembly, virtually, since the beginning of the pandemic.
- ACASC is hopeful that they will be able to hold another General Assembly at the end of the month with increased participation.
- Ms. Noel hopes to attend the state Executive Board meeting at the end of February.
- Fort Hill High School junior, Allison Schultz, is one of five potential candidates for the Student Member on the State Board of Education. Ms. Noel wished Allison luck, and noted that all of the candidates were young women.

Dr. David Bohn

Dr. Bohn took a moment to express his gratitude and appreciation for the staff’s hard work in expanding the AG program and on the addition of the Manufacturing Engineering Technology skill area and partnership with ACM on the new Makerspace.

Mr. Robert Farrell

Mr. Farrell took the opportunity to recognize ACPS graduate, Danny King, who played football for Fort Hill. King is attending West Virginia University and was recently recognized by the school for his accomplishments.

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank took the opportunity to express her excitement about Blueprint funding and looks forward to seeing all of the new offerings this money will afford ACPS.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley mentioned that the legislative session is underway and that there are several bills on the table that could have significant impacts on Allegany County. She encouraged the public to pay attention and to reach out with any questions they may have. Mrs. Fraley also noted that she recently had the opportunity to testify, as a parent and citizen of Allegany County, on a bill regarding reportable offenses.

Mr. Jeff Blank

Mr. Blank mentioned that he was in the process of meeting with high school principals regarding plans for this year’s graduation and certification ceremonies. Information will be provided to parents in the near future to allow for planning purposes.