

BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY: THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognition of Retirees

The school board recognized the following 2019 retirees and thanked them for their many years of service and dedication to the students of Allegany County Public Schools:

- Kathie Bruck, 44 years
- Helen Clise, 43 years
- Harry "Dee" Kalbaugh, 43 years
- Rosemary Scarpelli, 42 years
- Debra Slider, 41.5 years
- Linda Platt, 41 years
- Bruce Hanna, 39.5 years
- Theresa Hanna, 39.5 years
- Ronald Bittinger, 39.5 years
- Frank Clark, 39 years
- Michael Sarfino, 38 years
- Joseph Carter, 36 years
- Sharon Shade, 35 years
- Joretta Wright, 35 years
- Staci Rank, 34 years
- Loren Ritchie, 33.5 years
- Michael S. Calhoun, 32.5 years
- Norman DeRosa, 32 years
- Charles Shively, 32 years
- Robbie Rawlings, 32 years
- Esther Dee Blank, 30 years
- Carole Diehl, 30 years
- Thomas Harrison, 28 years
- Larry Humbertson, 26.5 years
- Robert DeVore, 26.5 years
- Leslie Cooper, 26 years
- Sally McAteer, 25 years
- Cynthia Shumaker, 24.5 years
- Ramona Lavin, 23 years
- Sindy Paris, 23 years
- Debra Redhead, 23 years
- Edgar Llewellyn, 21 years
- Dennis Johnson, 21 years
- Melissa Davis, 20.5 years
- Beverly McWhirter, 20 years
- Rebecca Walton, 16.5 years
- Michael G. Calhoun, 15 years
- Lizbeth Stakem, 15 years
- Timmie Lancaster, 15 years
- Jo Ann Whetzel, 15 years
- Barbara Kennedy, 13 years
- Denise Jolley, 13 years
- Richard Krauss, 9.5 years

Recognition of Chinese Immersion Program Student Team Placements at 9th Annual Chinese Bridge Language Competition

The school board recognized students from West Side Elementary School and Braddock Middle School who are enrolled in the Partial Chinese Immersion Program for their performances at the 9th Annual Chinese Bridge Language Competition. At the elementary level and competing against fifteen teams, West Side's first grade team tied for 3rd place; the fifth grade team tied for 2nd place; and the 3rd grade team won 1st place overall. Braddock's 6th grade team placed 2nd at the secondary level of the event. During the competition, teams were scored on both a speech portion worth 70% and a cultural performance piece worth 30%. This year's theme was "Why I Love Learning Chinese."

Recognition of Student Salute Winners

The school board recognized three ACPS recipients of the 2019 annual Student Salute program scholarships. Haley Viola, Fort Hill, will receive a \$5,000 one-year scholarship, to be used for tuition, to Frostburg State University for the 2019-2020 academic year. Meghan Murphy, Mountain Ridge, and Emily Book, Allegany, are the recipients of \$500 scholarships to FSU for the upcoming year.

Board of Education

Mr. Robert Farrell, President
Dr. David Bohn, Vice President
Mrs. Tammy Fraley
Mr. Wayne Foote
Mrs. Debra Frank
Dr. David Cox, Superintendent
Ms. Eesha Bokil, SMOB

CONSENT AGENDA

The school board voted unanimously to approve the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of minutes for Open Session and Public Meeting on May 6, 2019; Open Session and Public Meeting on May 24, 2019; and Open Session on May 31, 2019.
2. Receive routine personnel actions for period of May 1—31, 2019.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for period of May 1-31, 2019.
4. Receive information technology report for the period of May 1031, 2019.
5. Receive monthly financial report.

The Student Salute program is a collaborative effort to recognize high school seniors who excel in the classroom. Through the program, those students identified as exceptional academic achievers, based on GPA, school and community leaders, and who intend to enroll at FSU, earn the opportunity to qualify for scholarships.

The school system distributes and collects applications for the scholarships, which are converted into "on-air" salutes that run weekly

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT CONT.

on WCBC radio station. The Allegany County Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee reviews all applications and selects the FSU scholarship recipients.

Present Proclamation Recognizing May 13-17, 2019, as Pupil Personnel Worker Week

The school board presented a proclamation from the Governor's office to Mrs. Debra Metheny, ACPS Supervisor of Student Services, recognizing May 13-17, 2019, as Pupil Personnel Worker Week. Maryland recognizes Pupil Personnel Workers for serving all the children of all the people, promoting the opportunities for every child to experience a safe and healthy environment. These workers are specialists trained to consider and assess the needs of the total child and serve as the school's liaison with the family, community organizations, and social agencies to foster the child's physical, psychological, social and intellectual growth. PPWs work collaboratively with the resources of the home, school, and community essential to the good mental, emotional, and physical health of each child necessary to advance effective teaching, learning, and achievement in schools.

Recognition of Eesha Bokil, Student Member of the Board

The school board recognized outgoing Student Member of the Board, Eesha Bokil, for her service on the school board representing the students of Allegany County Public Schools. Eesha will be attending the University of Maryland College Park in the fall. The incoming SMOB is Omaer Naeem of Allegany High School.

Update on Middle School Block Schedule

Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, Chief Academic Officer, updated the school board on the middle school block schedule for the 2019-2020 school year. In 2009, middle schools moved to a modified block schedule that increased class time from 38 minutes to 76 minutes. Math and English/Language Arts was taught every day, and social studies and science was taught on a semester schedule. After some time with this schedule, teachers and administrators recommended that social studies and sciences be moved to an A/B schedule. This past school year, three middle schools decided to pilot a split social studies/science class, which was taught for 38 minutes each day. One school opted to continue with the A/B schedule for social studies and science. After surveying teachers to gather input on this pilot schedule, specifically the A/B day, the responses were overwhelming in favor of a split social studies/science daily schedule. However, there were several challenges within the current master schedule that didn't allow for this, and ACPS didn't have the funding for more staff. Through hard work and collaboration among middle school principals and content supervisors, all four schools were able to determine the best schedule for their individual schools. Three of the four requested to pilot the schedule that allowed for ELA, math, social studies, and science each day. Class times will vary slightly, allowing for 60-65 minute classes. There is no impact on creative arts courses, which always operate on an A/B schedule. This pilot schedule will be reevaluated next year.

Summer Lunchbox Program Report

Dr. Cox updated the school board on the Summer Lunch Box Program, which began in 2001 and is currently in its 19th year of providing free lunches to needy children and families during the summer months. This program also provides breakfast for children at the Constitution Park Day Camp. The outreach runs five days a week for eight weeks from June 17-August 9. By the end of the season, 800 children a day will be served in Cumberland. The program is funded by private donations only.

There are eight Cumberland distribution sites that include John Humbird Elementary School, St. John's Lutheran Church, Fort Cumberland playground, South Penn Elementary School, A.M.E. Church, the parking lot on the corner of Maryland Avenue and Spring Street, and Oldtown Manor.

The program is always in need of volunteers, whose duties would include packing lunches, counting supplies, delivering lunches, and cleaning coolers. Monetary donations are appreciated, so anyone interested should send a check, payable to the Summer Lunchbox Program, to Emmanuel Parish, 16 Washington Street, Cumberland. All contributions are tax deductible. For more information, contact Becky Millar, Program Coordinator, at 301-729-3136.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on the following regarding the FY2018 Financial Audit as well as monthly financial information for May 2019:

- Legal fees are in line with last year; however, they are nearing the end of the budget and will likely go over.

FINANCIAL UPDATES (CONT.)

- The cost of substitutes is down from this time last year.
- Equipment costs are more than last year but there is still plenty of money in the budget for upcoming, necessary purchases.
- The cost of tuition for non-public placements continues to decline, but this line item is budgeted very conservatively as things can change very quickly.
- Transportation and utilities are both in line with last year.
- Retirement costs are up from last year but are still within the budget.
- Healthcare costs have increased, likely due to two large claims that have met the stop loss limits, which has never occurred in the past.

Status of FY 2018 Financial Audit

Finance department staff is still diligently working with auditors from Huber Michaels to complete the FY2018 Financial Audit. They are nearing the end of their fieldwork as they work on the financial statements and ACPS staff works on the notes to those statements. One cause of the delay is that this is the first audit conducted on the new Tyler Munis system, and several reports that were easily accessible on the old system have now had to be created. Mr. McKenzie is hopeful that the audit will be finished within the next two weeks.

FY 2020 Operating Budget Update and Recommendations

Mr. McKenzie updated the school board on budget priorities and FY20 budget highlights. The school board's FY20 budget priorities are as follows:

- Preserve and enhance as many student programs as possible based on student interest and enrollment, including a focus on 21st Century learning, innovative programs, and possibly JROTC and Agricultural programs.
- Enhance school safety based on recommendations from the Maryland Center for School Safety and local law enforcement agencies.
- Provide resources to allow for a reduction of class size and teacher equity through number of classes assigned noting class preparation time requirements.
- Do not utilize fund balance to balance the budget.
- Provide resources to allow for enhanced mental health and social work services.
- Make every effort to provide employees with negotiated benefits, including salary and health insurance benefits, such that take home pay would not be less due to increased employee shared costs of health insurance.

The FY20 proposed balanced budget as of March 28, 2019, was \$116,188,894, and \$115,193,531 as of June 11, 2019. Overall, approximately \$995,363 had to be cut from the original proposed budget in order to balance the FY20 budget. The

county funded the school board at \$30,734,338 as mandated by the state, which was an increase of \$310,030 or about 1% over the prior year.

Several personnel highlights within the budget include:

- Allowed a placeholder for good faith negotiations with the district's four bargaining units.
- Negotiated an increase for Unit I large enough to "activate" additional funding from the state for teachers set aside in SB1030 The Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Provided for the continuation of athletic trainers at all three high schools.
- Moved Special Education personnel from Pass Through grant to unrestricted local funding as mandated by MSDE.
- Added three SROs (contracted services).
- Eliminated five positions through attrition while continuing to meet student needs.
- Provided an Equity Services Coordinator.
- Added one teacher to accommodate growth within the secondary Foreign Language program.
- Added two Behavioral Support Specialists at the secondary level as student resources.
- Appropriated funds for a Social Emotional Coach, should Title IV grant funding be discontinued.
- Proportionate share of mandated increases for school nurses (contracted services).

Several non-personnel highlights within the budget include:

- Eleven Active Learning Labs (ALL) classrooms will be added.
- Dual enrollment and P-TECH tuition costs will increase across the district by \$75,000.
- Plan, with school board approval, to assign savings from 2019 to purchase a generator. This assignment will allow for the removal of this cost from the 2020 budget.
- Continue to provide school-based allocations at a constant level when compared to prior year.
- Appropriate funding for staff development opportunities as requested.
- Appropriate funding for participation in Maryland Apprenticeship program.

Within the FY20 restricted budget, the following additional grants are included compared to the prior year's budget:

- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Grant
 - Concentration of Poverty Grant, \$248,833
 - Teacher Salary Incentive Grant, \$992,058
 - Students with Disabilities Grant, \$1,296,278
 - Transitional Supplemental Instruction, \$254,620
 - Mental Health Coordinator, \$83,333

Consider Approval of Proposed Separation Agreement with Dr. Cox

The school board voted 3-0 (two board members abstained from voting) to approve the proposed separation agreement with Dr. Cox, who has accepted the position of Director of Schools in Sullivan County, Tennessee. His last day in ACPS has not been determined.

Consider Approval of Recommended Personnel Reclassification Action

The school board unanimously approved personnel promotions via reclassification for administrative staff recommended by Dr. Cox.

Consider Approval of Personnel Promotion Actions with Noted Appointments

The school board unanimously approved four personnel promotions recommended by Dr. Cox for open principal positions and that of Assistant Supervisor of Athletics, Health and PE, and mental health.

Consider Approval of 2019 Master Plan for School Facilities

The school board approved the 2019 Master Plan for School Facilities, which is compiled annually with information supplied by Board of Education supervisors and Allegany County Government. Again this year, the 10-year enrollment projections were prepared using the program that was designed by the ACPS IT Department. It extrapolates the information and trends provided by the Maryland Office of Planning, who has accepted the projections. Upon school board approval, the plan will be submitted to the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

Consider Approval of Proposal to Digitize Student Records

The school board approved the proposal to digitize student record, which includes graduate records, withdrawal records, Bridge projects, and any other necessary record that needs to be stored as permanent student records per the Records Retention and Disposal Policy (File: EHB).

Records are scanned based on graduates from 1985 on and are stored electronically in Aspen. Only a small portion of records has been scanned. Records prior to 1985 are stored on a file server for retrieval in ACPS. More than one million records are estimated to be stored in paper form in all school buildings in file cabinets and boxes. There is a need to digitize records because staff is experiencing difficulty locating paper files when requested. For fifteen years, ACPS has employed one technician to scan records, which equates to approximately \$20,000 a year.

It is recommended that ACPS contract this service with a company that specializing in digitizing records. Allegany County may be the only remaining county in the state that does not utilize a company to scan, index, and store permanent student records electronically. Costs were reviewed from two vendors, and the one selected from Virginia Beach charges 6.5 cents per image or \$65,000. The cost for ongoing services would be about \$1,500 per year.

During the scan process, when a record request is made, the company will locate, scan, and provide the record electronically in 24 hours. They will also be provided in a format compatible with Aspen student information system. The company will securely pick up and transfer the documents from file boxes and cabinets. They will prep, scan, and index the records and store them online securely.

Consider Approval for Engrade Benchmark Assessment Replacement

Mrs. Grove also addressed the school board regarding the Engrade Benchmark Assessment Replacement Project. McGraw-Hill announced the end-of-life of Engrade effective June 30, 2019. A committee off teachers was formed to evaluate and select a replacement product. Seven products were evaluated over the course of three months, and the group selected Edcite Schools. ACPS administers benchmarks at least three times per year in grades pre-k through twelve in math, ELA, and science. Edcite will provide on-site training sessions for test authors to work with the imported test items as well as to create new test items in the new product. The cost of Edcite is \$30,750 per year, or \$122,250 in total with an additional \$30,000 in the first year for a Question and Test Interoperability import. ACPS plans to sign a three-year contract.

The school board voted to approve this replacement project.

Consider Approval of the Bid for OT/PT Contract for 2019-2020 School Year

The school board unanimously approved the award of the occupational and physical therapy contract to School Therapy Services, Inc., for the 2019-2020 school year. Per the MSDE approved bidding procedure, a notice was placed in the CTN in April, appeared on the ACPS website, and was placed on the Maryland Marketplace. Five companies attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting on April 24th, and included Pediatric Development Services, ES Healthcare, School Therapy Services, Therapia Staffing, and Cumberland Therapy. Two of four companies submitted a bid on time and were considered eligible bidders. One additional company submitted a bid past the deadline and was considered ineligible. A committee reviewed the bids and recommended that the OT/PT contract be awarded to School Therapy Services.

Consider Approval of FY 2020 Special Education Staffing Plan

Mrs. Debbie Metheny, Supervisor of Special Education, updated the school board on the FY20 Special Education Staffing Plan. The plan was developed with the goals and objectives of the Allegany County Master Plan in mind, and the components have been publicly discussed as part of the budgetary process. Allegany County's local application for federal funds in the amount of \$2,156,035 was funded by MSDE for FY19. Infant and Toddler funds in the amount of \$240,279 were also funded in FY19.

Staffing decisions for the 2019-2020 school year were made through a series of meetings during which special education administrators, facilitators, and staff looked at student data and identified IEP needs. Assignment of staff was based on student needs. The Special Education Department will employ, using local and restricted funding, the following providers at the beginning of the school year:

- 87.1 teaching positions
- 92 full-time instructional assistants
- 29.5 part-time instructional assistants
- 26.4 professional positions (audiology, speech, vision, interpreter, mental health counselor, school psychologists)
- 22.5 professional positions (infants and toddlers coordinator, facilitators, behavior specialists, non-public, assistive technology/data management, instructional specialist, itinerant autism specialist)

Changes affecting caseload and staffing throughout the year requires flexibility in regards to staffing. These changes are necessary to implement the IEPs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment to provide a free and appropriate public education. The staffing plan will be reviewed at monthly staffing meetings and quarterly Special Education

Citizen's Advisory Committee meetings.

The school board voted unanimously to approve the FY20 Special Education Staffing Plan.

Consider Approval of Insurance Coverage Recommendation for FY 2020

Currently, the school board's insurance coverage is provided by several organizations. CBIZ is the local insurance broker, and Erie Insurance through Livengood Insurance provides vehicle coverage for bus and fleet automotive services. This year, the school system reached out to MABE's pool to submit a proposal for insurance services. MABE previously quoted the school board's insurance business for FY2010, but at that time the school board decided to go with the incumbents for coverages. MABE has provided a quote, however, to be a member of the MABE pool, they require all coverages go through them, including fleet. This change would impact not only the coverages brokered by CBIZ but also the fleet coverages that are provided by Erie. The MABE pool currently includes seventeen of the 20 eligible districts within the state. The other four are large and self-funded. CBIZ reached out to Glatfelter, Hanover, and Wright Specialty for package and liability coverages, but the declined to bid on the business.

The anticipated overall cost of the insurance program would be \$588,273 with MABE compared to \$656,212 for coverages provided by the combination of the other organizations. The budget would need to be increased by \$65,000 to \$133,000. The school board approved the Superintendent to sign the MABE contract and bind the coverage for FY20 as of July 1, 2019.

Discuss and Approve Changes to Upcoming School Board Meeting Schedule

In order to finalize the budget and work through the interim superintendent search, the school board will hold another Open Budget Session on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, at 6 p.m. at the Central Office. Additionally, the July 16th meeting has been moved to July 9th in order to accommodate conflicting schedules.

Consider Approval of FY 2020 Operating Budget

The school board voted 3-2 to table the vote on the budget until after they have had more time to ask questions about specific line items. School board members Tammy Fraley and Deb Frank opposed tabling the already balanced budget as it is due to the County by the end of the month and making changes this late in the process could prove difficult to finalize.

Interim Superintendent Appointment Process

The school board announced that they are in the beginning

NEW BUSINESS CONT.

stages of developing a process to select an interim superintendent. There will be an opportunity for those qualified and interested to inquire about the position.

Consider First Reading of Teaching Controversial Issues Policy (File: IMB)

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to establish guidelines for the teaching of controversial issues.” The policy states, “The BOE recognizes the role of public education in preparing students for effective citizenship. Consequently, the instructional program developed to achieve this purpose must appropriately emphasize cultural heritage, and the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship. The BOE also recognizes that as students prepare for effective citizenship, they often encounter issues that may be considered controversial. The BOE encourages the examination of controversial issues related to Board-approved curriculum in an impartial and objective manner.”

This policy will be sent back to the Policy Committee for clarification and modification prior to the second reading.

Discuss ECAE School Safety and Security Policy Next Steps

The school board discussed 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” as there may be possible conflicts with areas of education law.

The policy committee, who is at an impasse, suggested a vote from the school board on one of the following two options:

- Seek a declaratory decision from the State Board of Education regarding sections 4-103 and 6-201 and the definitions of certified vs. non-certified and professional vs. non-professional
- Make a motion on the first reading of the policy with the proposed language with the potential issue after the policy passes

After a lengthy discussion, the school board ultimately and unanimously voted to seek a declaratory decision from the State Board of Education.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session on July 9, 2019, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, July 9 2019, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The meeting will be held at the Board of Education’s Central Office at 6 p.m. Please note the date change.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mr. Jeff Davis

Mr. Davis addressed the school board seeking their support of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Maryland is the first state in the country to create such a forum to investigate racial lynching. Mr. Davis is also part of a new project called the Allegany County Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and as part of HB307, will participate in regional hearings to make recommendations to address and reconcile communities affected by racially motivated lynching. It is his hope that the school board will endorse the formation of this committee to encourage community involvement. Additionally, Allegany County’s committee is also partnering with the Equal Justice Initiative, who sponsors nearly \$5,000 in scholarships for high school essay contest participants.

Mr. Evan West

Mr. West addressed the school board regarding the policy Teaching on Controversial Issues (File: IMB) which was part of the board’s new business. His specific concerns are with 1) the definition of a controversial issue – “a point or matter about which there exist significant opposing viewpoints and/or multiple perspectives” – and 2) compliance. Mr. West argues that this definition is too broad as there really isn’t any topic this day and age that doesn’t have multiple perspectives and viewpoints. Additionally, he is curious about the levels of oversight outlined in the compliance section of the policy. Mr. West encouraged the school board to take these concerns into consideration when voting on this policy.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS (CONT.)

Mrs. Jackie Sams

Mrs. Sams addressed the school board regarding the future of Allegany County Public Schools. She noted that this year will be one of transition with the exit of Dr. Cox and the onboarding of an interim superintendent, and stated that one thing that will help during this period is as much continuity as possible. Mrs. Sams is hopeful that administrators and building leaders will be in place prior to the appointment of an interim superintendent to help with effective leadership. If not, it will create an unnecessary interruption in the functioning of the schools. Finally, Mrs. Sams questioned whether or not ACPS taught any type of financial literacy courses as she feels that they are a necessary part of learning. Dr. Cox informed her that not only is financial literacy taught in ACPS at both the middle and high school levels, it is also a graduation requirement.

Mr. Alan Septhoff

Mr. Septhoff addressed the school board as a parent who moved to the area in 2007 because he wanted his children to benefit from all that ACPS has to offer. He is now second guessing his decision because he feels that the school board's "governing majority" is not displaying the traits he teaches his kids – respect, fairness, and to prepare for the future. Mr. Septhoff is now concerned that this "governing majority" will not make the best choice for a new superintendent, but feels strongly that they owe the parents and students of ACPS a transparent hiring process. He stated that the students deserve a forward-thinking, ethical, and respectful superintendent.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Debra Frank

Mrs. Frank expanded on a comment she made at a previous school board meeting that she felt was misunderstood. She is not originally from Allegany County, and she stated that until someone has had the opportunity to see other educational systems it's hard to appreciate how wonderful Allegany County is and all that it has to offer students, which in her opinion, is far more than many she's seen.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley thanked the constituents who spoke and acknowledged how difficult it can be to voice an opinion. She noted that the school board was elected by the people and for the people and they, as a board, need to be understanding of the public's concerns and consider everyone's opinions when making decisions. Mrs. Fraley also reiterated that ACPS does, in fact, teach financial literacy courses at both the middle and high school levels, and she hopes to have an update on the program at a future school board meeting.

Mr. Robert Farrell

Mr. Farrell reiterated his support of the Chinese Immersion program, and hopes to see it expanded. He also thanked the public for attending the meeting.

Dr. David Bohn

Dr. Bohn stated that he is in support of the Chinese Immersion program, and would like to look at ways to expand it to the western region of the county. He noted that he was born in Allegany County, is very proud of the area, and wants to work to make the school system as strong and effective as it can be. But that will require changes – some people will like the changes and others won't.

Mr. Wayne Foote

Mr. Foote is from Allegany County, but taught in Prince George's County in the 1960s. He was happy to come back and fortunate to get a job teaching art and coaching soccer. He noted that he originally ran for the school board to help improve teacher morale, and now he is on the school board for a second term to advocate for every program that is good for students. Mr. Foote also praised the 2019 retirees and thanked the public for coming to the meeting.

Ms. Eesha Bokil, SMOB

Eesha gave several updates. ACASC attended the Mental Health and Wellness Fair; the current and incoming ACASC Executive Board had the opportunity to present information on their Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs campaign to the Allegany County Health Department; the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council met with Dr. Cox; and the Executive Board met to discuss future plans and initiatives.