

BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY: THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognize Rita Knox, NPS Ranger, for Dedication to ACPS Students

The school board recognized Rita Know, National Park Service Ranger, upon her retirement for her outstanding effort and priceless contribution in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the local history of the C&O Canal in Western Maryland. Ranger Knox supported ACPS in her service throughout the Canal Day School Program and has touched the lives of many students during her career.

Present Proclamation Recognizing March as Music in Our Schools Month

The school board presented a proclamation recognizing March as Music in Our Schools Month as designated by the National Association for Music Education. This year's theme is "All Music, All People." The study of music contributes to the development of young people through heightened skills in listening, reading, self-expression, and creativity and is basic to a complete education. The study of music also provides a competitive edge for successful educational reform while engaging students in individual and group activities, which develops creativity, problem-solving, and critical and evaluative skills. Music education helps students acquire skills in the production and performance of music, as well as gives them an understanding of history and culture. Music and other arts significantly enhance the morale and quality of the school environment, and music programs should be maintained and improved for all students, regardless of their socio-economic status or their abilities.

Additionally, Allegany High School student, Genevieve Batman, played a solo piece on her cello for school board members and the audience.

Present Proclamation Recognizing March as Youth Art Month

The school board presented a proclamation recognizing March as Youth Art Month as designated by the National Art Education Association. This year's theme is "Your Art, Your Story." Art education contributes powerful educational benefits to all elementary, middle, and high school students and develops their creative problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. Art education also teaches sensitivity to beauty, order, and other expressive qualities and gives students a deeper understanding of multi-cultural values and beliefs. Art education reinforces and brings to life what students learn in other subjects and interrelates student learning in art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

Additionally, Allegany High School student, Sklyer Ellsworth, had a variety of her artwork on display for the community to view. This display will be moved to the BOE central office for the remainder of the month.

INSTRUCTIONAL & DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Secondary After School Program Update

Mr. Eric VanSlyke, ACPS Secondary Science Supervisor, updated the school board on the Public School Opportunity Enhancement Grant, Full STEAM Ahead with ACCESS, which serves up to 200 students (50 per each middle school). This is a \$200,000 matching grant

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

per year for four years. There are currently 175 enrolled in this after school opportunity - 83 sixth graders; 57 seventh graders; 35 eighth graders; 43 special education students; and seven with a 504. Students receive a meal provided by HRDC, physical activity, one hour of academic and enrichment time each (both uninterrupted), and robotics. Students also have the opportunity to attend a variety of fieldtrips, including to the FSU Carnegie Science Center, the YMCA, local public libraries, Evergreen Heritage Center, the Rocky Gap aviary and nature center, ACM for forestry and swimming, and to the Wisp Resort for adventure sports.

Enrichment activities in the program include:

- Evergreen Heritage Center – in-school energy audit, indoor air quality, and water conservation
- Allegany County Library System – internet resources
- Allegany County Health Department – addictions, drugs, opioids
- Act 1st - personal financial responsibility and literacy
- Western Maryland Health System – wellness, FITT, meditation
- University of MD Extension Office – master gardener and nutrition
- Family Crisis Resource Center – boys and girls empowerment program

Frostburg State University also provides EchoStars, AmeriCorps/VISTA volunteers, and

INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATES CONT.

current education majors to serve as mentors and tutors within the schools.

ACPS was awarded a \$12,500 robotics grant last year, and another \$8,000 this year to purchase EV3 robots for each school as part of the First Lego League robotics program.

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on the following financial highlights from February 2019:

- Legal fees are trending well compared to last year with a positive variance of \$17,861
- Substitutes have a positive variance of \$39,039
- Equipment purchases are in line with last year at this time having spent 96% of the budget
- Tuition for non-public placements have a positive variance of \$185,128
- Transportation costs have a negative variance but are in line with last year
- Utilities are trending well with a positive variance of \$141,155
- Retirement costs are higher, but is likely just a timing issue
- Healthcare cost are substantially higher compared to this time last year; however, there have been eight claims over \$150,000. Of those eight, two are over \$250,000, and two more are over \$350,000. Last year there were only a total of two claims over \$150,000.

Summary of FY2020 Superintendent's Operating Budget

Mr. McKenzie began this presentation with defining the role of the Superintendent: "The County Superintendent shall (1) take the initiative in the preparation and presentation for the annual school budget; and (2) seek in every way to secure the adequate funds from local authorities for the support and development of the public schools in the county." (MD Code Annotated, Education Article 4-205 (K)).

The role of the local school board is "With the advice of the local superintendent, the local board is responsible for preparing the school system budget in accordance with the state statutory and regulatory requirement for submitting its budget to the county government (MD Code Annotated, Education Article 5-101 and 5-102.)" In addition, the local board sets the parameters for employee compensation and other terms of the pending collective bargaining agreements; identifies educational goals and objectives for the superintendent to implement; and engages the public in identifying budget priorities.

Several budget consideration are as follows:

- Maryland school systems do not have the authority to bond debt, levy taxes, or raise revenues on their own
- The state provides revenues to the district based upon the district's enrollment demographics and the district's relative wealth
- Local government is obligated to fund their local district annually
- The school system must prepare and present a balanced budget. The board's budget will be presented to county government on March 28, 2019, at 1 p.m.

Several personnel assumptions within the FY2020 operating budget are as follows:

- Allow a placeholder for good faith negotiations with the district's four bargaining units
- Recognize increasing healthcare costs
- Add five teachers within the 3-5 grade band to reduce teacher to student ration below 19:1
- Moved special education personnel from Pass Through grant as mandated by MSDE
- Provide an Equity Services Coordinator
- Appropriate funds for a Social Emotional Coach, should Title IV grant funding be discontinued
- Add three School Resource Officers (contracted services)
- Proportionate share of the mandated increases for school nurses (contracted nurses)

Several non-personnel assumptions within the FY2020 operating budget are as follows:

- Remaining technology funds removed from previous budgets will be reinstated at \$300,000
- Purchase middle school math textbook series and dual enrollment textbooks at \$600,000
- Seven additional Active Learning Labs or ALL classrooms will be funded at \$140,000
- Dual enrollment and P-TECH tuition costs will increase across the district by \$75,000
- Participation in Maryland Apprenticeship program at \$25,000
- Continue to provide school-based allocations at a constant level when compared to prior years as well as providing for certain supplies typically billed to the school
- Provide increase for athletic transportation allocation to each school
- Appropriate funding for staff development opportunities as requested
- Prepare a budget within the parameters outlined by the board

INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATES CONT.

The FY2020 budget by object category is as follows:

- Salaries and Wages \$66,277,247
- Contracted Services \$9,459,882
- Supplies and Materials \$4,244,476
- Other Charges \$3,737,307
- Fixed Charges \$26,596,018
- Equipment and Buildings \$1,797,060
- Transfers \$4,574,685

The FY2020 budget by category is as follows:

- Instructional salaries \$40,538,473
- Maintenance \$1,953,858
- Mid-Level Administration \$6,903,140
- Operations \$7,788,081
- Other Instructional Costs \$2,622,573
- Special Education \$16,224,207
- Student Personnel \$753,375
- Textbooks and Instructional Supplies \$2,761,076
- Transportation \$6,319,434
- Administration \$2,490,424
- Capital Outlay \$290,000
- Fixed Charges \$26,596,017
- Food Services \$502,967
- Health Services \$40,538,473

The unrestricted revenue in the FY2020 Superintendent's Budget is \$30,734,338. The school board will have to request an additional \$1,535,534 to balance the budget for a total requested appropriation from the county of \$32,269,872. The total FY2020 Superintendent's Budget is currently \$116,586,675.

Several other FY2020 budget considerations are as follows:

- Healthcare costs still remain a concern as the district has seen an increase in large claims this fiscal year.
- Negotiations are ongoing with all bargaining units.
- There has been a shift in the rank and make-up of some Title I schools that may have staffing implications within those schools.
- From a legislative standpoint, PSSAM and MABE are monitoring several bills that could potentially impact school system finances. A major bill was introduced on March 4th, HB1413 – The Blueprint for Maryland's Future – which represents some initial legislation relating to the Kirwan Commission. Also, the bill to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hr. is also being monitored.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Approval of FY2020 Superintendent's Operating Budget

The school board voted 3-2 to approve the FY2020 Superintendent's Operating Budget with an amendment to remove the addition of five new teachers necessary to reduce the class size ratio in grades 3-5. Mrs. Fraley and Mrs. Frank both opposed this vote as they thought the budget should be presented to the county prior to any cuts being made after it was determined what level of funding ACPS would receive.

Consideration of School Safety Officers Policy (File: ECAE) Revision

The school board voted 3-2 to send the above policy, whose purpose is "to describe the function of the school safety coordinator and school safety officers and system-wide duties," back to the Superintendent and legal counsel for revision. Mrs. Fraley noted that per school board policy, the Policy Committee, not just the superintendent and legal counsel, should review this. Mrs. Frank concurred.

The policy currently states, "The BOE desires to provide safe, orderly, and caring learning environments in which all students feel comfortable. All members of the educational community share the responsibility for maintaining a positive and secure school setting. To this end, the BOE is authorized and empowered to employ School Safety Officers 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." It continues, "In accordance with the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, the superintendent shall appoint personnel to fulfill the duties set forth in the act, described as a School Safety Coordinator, who must be certified by the Maryland Center for School Safety and serve as a liaison between ACPS, local law enforcement, and the Maryland Center for School Safety."

Consideration of Board Meeting Schedule

No motion was made to consider a new board meeting schedule.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session March 26, 2019, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The Executive Session will be followed by the Open Session at 6 p.m. at the Center for Career and Technical Education.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley announced how proud she was to have had the opportunity to walk with ACEA at the March for Our Schools event. The crowd was very passionate about the need to fund public education. She reiterated the need to reach out to the local delegation to hold them accountable to fight for Western Maryland's educational funding as every student deserves an education, and every teacher deserves a living wage. Mrs. Fraley plans to attend the annual Teacher of the Year Banquet on March 18th; Leadership Allegany Rising graduation on March 14th; and as part of her duties on the MABE board of directors the NSBA conference in Philadelphia at the end of the month. She concluded by thanking the DelFest Foundation for bringing bluegrass music into our middle schools.

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank also thanked ACEA for their organization of local members at the March for Our Schools event and was proud to walk with them. She noted that the event was extremely impactful. Mrs. Frank, along with other school board members, also recently visited Active Learning Lab classrooms at John Humbird, and she plans to continue her visits to schools and classrooms. Mrs. Frank also polled the audience to see how many were attending school board meetings for the better parking or convenience to their homes and how many would attend at the Central Office simply because they are concerned about the direction of the school system. The majority indicated that they would attend regardless of where the meetings were being held and that parking wasn't a driving factor in their attendance.

Mr. Wayne Foote

Mr. Foote addressed the audience to inform them that his number one reason for running for school board was for teachers, custodial and maintenance workers, and food service workers. He thanked Mr. Carter and the Mountain Ridge staff for hosting the meeting noting that its nice to see so many people in attendance and that there is available parking for everyone. Mr. Foote also mentioned that he recently attended the LAC meeting, where he gathered good information about the partnerships between ACPS, the Career Center and ACM as well as enjoyed a delicious meal.

Ms. Eesha Bokil, SMOB

Eesha updated the school board on the following regarding the Allegany County Association of Student Councils:

- The ACASC Executive Board has been holding meetings with the Environmental Committee to plan events for next school year.
- The ACASE Executive Board met to discuss and continue to plan the Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs campaign that will be held in conjunction with the Health Department.
- Members attended the Western Maryland Leadership Summit where they presented a workshop on mental health.
- While at the summit, Executive Board members had the opportunity to attend a workshop on advocacy presented by Washington County and one on leadership presented by Garrett County.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mr. Evan West, ACEA UniServe Director

Mr. West noted that 8,500 MSEA members went to Annapolis to participate in the March for Our Schools event to support public education. Locally, ACEA had more than double the participants attend the walk than at last year's Fix the Fund rally. He asked the school board if they are willing to not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk about what is important for public education. Mr. West indicated that there is local work to be done to convince decision and policy makers that they need to support ACEA to do what is necessary to fund schools to make possible what the Blueprint for Maryland's Future suggests. His specific question to the school board was if they would be willing to walk with ACEA in this fight. He reminded school board members that all, at some point publicly, stated their concern for employee morale and wanted them to prove their sincerity. Two current school board members, Tammy Fraley and Deb Frank, did attend the walk with ACEA. Mr. West felt that their support was a good first step, but hopes that the entire board will be willing to call, email, and speak with delegates to get support for the Blueprint as well as lobby county government to fund the school system above Maintenance of Effort.

Mrs. Peggy Bass, Vice President ACEA

Mrs. Bass told the school board that she was proud of the numerous ACEA participants, two school board members, and the community who attended the March for Our Schools event. Especially to the ACEA members who taught school all day, traveled to Annapolis with school work with them, marched, and traveled home, got very little sleep, and went back to their classrooms in the morning to continue to provide the best educational opportunities to students with the resources they have. She indicated that teachers witness and bear the brunt of underfunded public schools on a daily basis, and so they walked for this: adequate staffing to reduce large class sizes; improved services such as Special Education and school counseling; funding for universal pre-k for all 3 and 4 year olds; improved and increased CCTE programs; and more respect and just compensation for educators. Mrs. Bass concluded that fully funded public education won't be a reality unless people advocate for it.