

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Opening of School

Dr. Cox reported a very successful opening of schools for the 2015-2016 school year. As is his annual tradition on the first day of school, he joined students on Dennis McCormick's bus #55 en route to Fort Hill High School and Northeast Elementary School. He thanked staff and administrators for their careful planning and hard work to ensure a successful opening.

Additionally, he noted that the school system's official enrollment count is finalized on September 30th of each year; however, he did report a preliminary August 2015 enrollment of 8,768. This number does not subtract out all students who may have withdrawn from school, and it also includes some pre-k figures. In comparison, ACPS's enrollment count as of September 30, 2014, for K-12 was 8,332.

Recognize 2015 Maryland History Day Competition 2nd Place Winners

The school board recognized four Allegany High School students for placing 2nd at the Maryland History Day event last year for their exhibit entitled "The Manhattan Project." The honored students were Kobe Bosley, Jesse Golub, Andrew Beck, and Evan Hostetler. These young men had the opportunity to represent Allegany High School at the national competition in June.

The Maryland History Day competition is sponsored by the Maryland Humanities Council and local school districts and encourages students in grades 6-12 to explore local, state and national history. Projects can be entered as individuals or in groups in the categories of documentaries, performances or exhibits. ACPS had 78 students participate last year, with seventeen

projects advancing to the state level, and The Manhattan Project advancing to the national competition.

Legislative Updates

- **College and Career Readiness:** In 2013, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 740, which had a provision indicating that students are expected to be college and career ready. This year, the law calls for students to be assessed in the spring of 2016 in order to determine college and career readiness. If they are not, they are expected to take a transitional course. Several organizations – the Public School Superintendent's Association of Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges – are actively discussing ways to measure and assess students in a more uniform manner to determine college and career readiness. Some of these measures include the PARCC assessments in English 11 and Algebra II, graduation requirements of English 10 and Algebra I, and minimum scores on SATs, ACTs and even PSATs.
- **Testing:** While assessing children is necessary to continue to make educational gains, there are a need to examine the interplay between and the possible duplication of local, state and federally mandated assessments. House Bill 452 requires the formation of a Commission to review Maryland's use of assessments and testing in public schools. The Commission will survey, assess, review and make recommendations regarding certain matters and report its findings and recommendations to the State Board

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of Education.

- **ESEA:** The most recent version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is known as No Child Left Behind, actually expired in 2007, and school systems have been operating under waivers for several years. This year, however, the movement on the reauthorization of ESEA has been great. In July, the House and the Senate both passed different versions of this bill, and these differences are currently being discussed in conference committees. Some of these issues at odds include Title I portability and accountability. Several areas of commonality in these versions are that they both eliminate AYP; they both maintain federal annual testing requirements; neither requires forcing states to evaluate teachers in a prescriptive manner; and both prevent the U.S. Secretary of Education to prescribe specific standards for states.

Agricultural Program Concerns

Dr. Cox provided information on the school system's decision to eliminate agriculture education in ACPS in response to a concern that arose at last month's meeting. Agricultural education is a career and technical program and is designed and expected to be a completer course. A completer course is a series of four courses designed to be taken in sequence. Programs such as this, and like many others at the Career Center, are elective courses and not graduation requirements. Students choose to enroll in these courses. In addition, FFA is a companion program to agricultural education, and a requirement of FFA, not ACPS, is that in order for a student to participate in FFA, they must

currently be enrolled in an agricultural education course. There is no flexibility from FFA on this at the present time.

From 2008-2001, the agricultural education program was housed at Fort Hill High School before moving to the Career Center in 2012. During this time, statistics showed that as students moved through the completer sequence, enrollment tapered significantly, which was one of the reasons for its relocation to the Career Center. However, during the program's three-year run at the Career Center, the same trend of declining enrollment continued. The school system asked for the support of the agricultural community to try to recruit students for the program in January 2014, and initially twelve students enrolled. However, once they got to the Career Center and their first choice of skill area became available, they withdrew, thus causing ACPS to discontinue the program this year. Student interest in a program is really what drives the enrollment in a program. While students at the CCTE were passionate about agricultural education, their main interests were those of other skill areas.

"Ask ACPS" Overview

The school system has implemented a new electronic tool, Ask ACPS, which will give parents and the community the opportunity to ask for more information on topics ranging from programs, initiatives, curriculum and assessments in an effort to gain a better understanding of what is happening within the school system. An electronic form can be completed via the ACPS website to offer suggested topics for discussion that will periodically be answered either through text, video or both, and posted in blog form on the webpage.

WORK SESSION NOTABLES

Maintenance and Construction Update

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

- **Braddock Middle School Roof Replacement:** Staff has received and responded to the DGS comments and will move to advertise the project for bid in September. The contract will hopefully be awarded in October. The project is scheduled to be completed June 2016.
- **Frost Roof Replacement Project:** It has been requested that the state extend the funding for the project. Bids will be advertised in October and should begin in the spring.
- **Allegany High School Project:** Bids were received for the construction of the new school; however, all five bids came in over the available funding for the project. Funding for school construction is now a part of COMAR. There are three sections in COMAR that apply to this project, and staff is currently evaluating each section to determine which option would be in the best interest of the school board. Additionally, all five bids and supporting documents still need to be reviewed. Staff hopes to have a recommendation on how to proceed at the October meeting.

Attendance Report

Dr. Ben Brauer, Supervisor of Student Services, updated the school board on attendance in ACPS. Several years ago the school system revised its regulations on school attendance to align with the State's satisfactory mark of 94% in an effort to allow ACPS to reach that number. Data reviewed over a

three-year time period showed that ACPS not only reached 94%, but also increased to 94.2%. Additionally, the State also reviews chronic truancy, which is defined as missing 20% or more of the school year unexcused. ACPS also reviewed chronic truancy over the same three-year period and successfully went from 99 individually truant students the first year, to 72 the following year, to finally only 50 chronically truant student within the school system last year.

Dr. Brauer noted that managing attendance in an effort to get students to come to school, want to be in school and ultimately be successful while at school is a job of many individuals. He publicly recognized the following individuals in attendance at the meeting for their efforts in producing the above results on attendance and truancy:

- Charles Hinnant, Cumberland City Police Chief
- Lt. Rocky Reed, Cumberland City Police
- Officer Chris Fraley, Cumberland City Police/SRO
- Officer James Beck, Cumberland City Police/SRO
- Officer Matt Beeman, Frostburg City Police/SRO
- Shannon Robinson, Allegany County Sheriff's Department
- Tim Stevens, ACPS Security Officer
- Bryan Hughes, ACPS Security Officer
- Renee Page, DJS
- Brent Dressman, DSS
- Michael Twigg, State's Attorney
- Kim Taylor, PPW
- Randi Agetstein, ACPS Asst. Supervisor Special Education/Student Services
- Kelly Cassell, Academic Dean Allegany High School

- Terri Danner, Project YES Coordinator
- Sydney Sibley, Project YES Coordinator
- Terena Knotts, Project YES Coordinator
- Lori Sadler, Truancy Prevention Program
- Ty Miller, ACPS Alternative Programming

PARCC Updates/Testing Window

The PARCC assessments are changing. In 2015-2016, the assessment will be given during one testing window. States and schools will have up to 30 school days in which to test, but most can/will complete all testing in a one to two week period, depending on their schedules. The new single window will end at the 90% mark of the school year. ACPS’s testing window will be April 7, 2016, through May 20, 2016.

This change will cut testing time by approximately 90 minutes in all grades, and students in all grades will participate in fewer test units. Each PARCC assessment is administered in multiple sections called units. The redesigned ELA/Literacy tests are composed of three units, and the proposed math tests are composed of three or four units. Additionally, the test design changes do not result in the loss of any performance tasks in English Language Arts/Literacy or math with the exception of Algebra II and Integrated Math III at the high school level.

As with all similar testing, field test items are embedded in each student’s test. Because the performance tasks in ELA/L are longer, a sampling of students had to take a standalone field test unit in the spring of 2015. To further streamline the process for all schools, the PARCC field test will now be wrapped into the testing window. Each year, a small percentage of students will take an additional ELA unit. Schools/classrooms selected in one year will in almost all cases not have to field test again for several years.

The ACPS testing calendar for the 2015-2016 school year is as follows:

- Alt MSA Science for Alt students in grades 5, 8, 10 – October 2015 through February 2016
- High School Assessments (online) for students who have failed or missed the assessments in Government and Biology – October 5-16, 2015
- PSAT (required for all 10th graders) – October 14, 2015
- High School Assessments (online) for students who have failed or missed the assessments in Government and Biology – January 11-22, 2016
- NCSC (online) for Alt students in grades 3-8, 11 – March 2016 through May 2016
- MSA Science (online) for students in grades 5, 8 – March 2, 2016, through April 1, 2016
- PARCC (online) Language Arts grades 3-8; math grades 3-8; English 2; English 3; Algebra I; Algebra II – April 7, 2016, through May 20, 2016
- High School Assessments (online) end of course test for all students in course; students who have failed or missed assessments in Government

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Second Reading of Policy for Automated External Defibrillator (File: JLCEC)

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to provide procedures in the operation and use of automated external defibrillators (AED) in the event of a cardiac arrest emergency.

The policy states “ACPS recognizes the need to develop and implement an AED program for each of its schools as prescribed in Section 13-517 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland and COMAR 13A.05.10. ACPS will comply with the Maryland Medical Services Systems requirements Annotated Code requirements and COMAR requirements for the implementation and maintenance of the AED program.”

Consider Second Reading of Policy for Technology Responsible Use – Employees (File: GBM)

The school board approved the second 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.”

The policy states “Technology use in ACPS is for educational purposes, such as accessing curriculum-related information, sharing resources, and promoting innovation that enrich the curriculum and the instructional program. Technology extends the classroom beyond the school building by providing access to information resources on local, state, national, and international electronic networks such as the Internet. Use of the Internet for purposes of locating information and facilitating communication are critical literacy skills. Opinions expressed by staff may not represent the position of ACPS. Technology use is a privilege that can be revoked. Inappropriate use will be addressed by administrative disciplinary actions. There is no expectation of privacy while connected to the ACPS network.”

ACEA Presentation

In the spring of 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB 497 into law. That law created the Commission to Review Maryland's Use of Assessments and Testing in Public Education. The Commission is tasked with assessing how much instructional time is compromised due to mandated assessments at all levels. Local systems are required to assess and report their data to MSDE by October 15th. MSDE will then report their findings to the Commission who will in turn make recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the Allegany County Education Association (ACEA) will have a major role to play in reviewing and analyzing the data. Therefore, a local Time to Learn Committee has been formed to do the following:

- Assist ACEA in gathering its own data from ACEA members as to how instructional time is affected by testing;
- Analyze that data and compare it to the school system's data;
- Report the results of its work to ACEA membership, MSEA, the school system and the general public; and
- Make recommendation to MSEA, the Commission and the school system based on the results of its work.

The Time to Learn Committee conducted a survey of its members asking the following questions (128 respondents):

1. Indicate how many mandated assessments you administer in a given school year. Include benchmarks, formative assessments, PARCC or any other assessment you are required to administer.
 - a. 33.59%, or 43 members, answered more than fifteen assessments.
2. Estimate how much time you spend in direct administration of mandated assessments during any given semester.
 - a. 45.31%, or 58 members, answered more than fifteen hours.
3. Estimate how much time you spend accumulating mandated assessment data, scoring assessments, reporting data or spend otherwise dealing with the data requirements of those assessments in a given semester.
 - a. 39.37%, or 50 members, answered more than fifteen hours.

Respondents indicated that they deal with the following grade levels most: Pre-K through 2, 23.44%; Grades 3-5, 25%; Grades 6-8, 21.09%; Grades 9-12, 28.13%; Other, 2.34%.

Policy Regulation for Evaluation of Students (File: IKA-R1)

The school board heard updates to the regulations for the above policy, whose purpose is "to identify the Board's position regarding the evaluation of student academic progress."

The policy states, "It is the philosophy of ACPS that grading promotes learning, achievement, and academic growth in a climate of encouragement and high expectations. ACPS strives for all students to be prepared for college and/or careers. Learning experiences, assignments, and assessments provide challenge, growth and feedback for improvement in order to foster opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of curricular expectations. Grades reflect the extent to which the student has achieved the learning outcomes specified by ACPS and the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum. The grading and reporting system will support the learning process and student success."

"In consideration of this philosophy, the Board of Education is committed to maintaining rigorous performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for August 11, 2015, Work Session and August 11, 2015, Business Meeting.
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of August 1-31, 2015.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for period of August 1-31, 2015.
4. Receive information technology report for the period of August 1-31, 2015.
5. Approve the nomination or reappointment of individuals to the Local Advisory Council for Career and Technology Education.
6. Approve coal bids for the 2015-2016 school year.
7. Approve a bid for heating oil for the 2015-2016 school year.

The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Policy Reg. (File: IKA-R1 Cont.)

process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and parents. Grades are an essential way to communicate student progress and reflect what students know and are able to do in relation to curricular expectations."

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Appointment of Dr. Ann Getty to the Ethics Panel

The school board approved the appointment of Dr. Ann Getty to the Ethics Panel. The Allegany County Board of Education Ethics Panel consists of five members, appointed by the Board and serving for overlapping five-year terms. One of the responsibilities of the Allegany County Board of Education Ethics Panel is to provide information regarding the purposes and application of the ethics regulations established for Board of Education officials and employees. The Ethics Panel developed an ethics document that describes its membership, terms, and responsibilities as well as the ethics regulations for Allegany County and procedures for advisory opinions and formal complaints.

Consider Approval of FY2017 Capital Improvement Plan

The school board approved the FY 2017 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan includes the request for funding for the next year of the Allegany High School project. The State's share of the funding has been requested over four fiscal years. To date, the Board of Public Works has approved \$16 million for the project.

The State's funding formula was revised last year. The results of the revisions to the formula are that the State's share of school construction projects dropped from 93% to 88% for FY 2016 and will be reduced to 83% for FY 2017 and FY 2018. The funding for the Allegany project is locked in at 93%. The following projects have been revised to reflect the new funding formula: Mt. Savage Roof Replacement; Bel Air Roof Replacement; Northeast Roof Replacement; Career Center Roof Replacement Phase I and II, and Northeast Gym Addition.

The plan also requests funding for the second phase of the roof replacement project at Mt. Savage School in FY 2017. The first phase of the roof replacement was completed as a locally funded project in 2010. Future roof replacement projects are also included for the next four fiscal years.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session in October

The school board voted to meet in an Executive Session on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, pending any appeals or unfinished business.

REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jenna Puffinburger, Student Member of the Board

Jenna attended the Maryland Association of Boards of Education's new Student Board Member Orientation over the summer and found it to be a great networking opportunity as well as a very informative experience. The Allegany County Association of Student Councils will hold its opening picnic on September 23, 2015, and will be an opportunity for all schools to give a report about happenings within their respective schools. Additionally, student council representatives have begun making visits to middle schools in an effort to get students at that level more involved in student council.

CONSTITUENTS' COMMENTS

Mrs. Erin DeLong

Mrs. DeLong addressed the school board regarding the Allegany High School project. She specifically asked the school board to press forward to make this project a reality no matter what it takes, as the need for a new Allegany is huge. She asked them to begin to engage in the hard work and discussions that will be necessary to secure the funding needed to build a new school. Mrs. DeLong also noted that it will take a joint effort and the full support of the school board, the Mayor and City Council of Cumberland, the Western Maryland Delegation, and the Allegany County Commissioners to get this school built.

NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled Work Session and Business Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. respectively.