

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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Board of Education

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Introduce Student Page and Alternate for 2016 Legislative Session

Allegany High School senior, Thorne Lindsey, was selected to represent Allegany County as a Student Page during the 2016 Maryland General Assembly session held at the Maryland State House in Annapolis. Timothy Friend, senior at Fort Hill High School, will serve as this year's alternate.

The purpose of the Student Page program is to raise the youth awareness level in state government and legislative proceedings. Each selected page will have an assortment of duties assigned to them during their two-week terms in either the House of Delegates or the State Senate. Such duties may include bookkeeping, distribution of materials, running errands, answering telephones, and delivering messages. A page may also earn the opportunity to work within the legislative offices to assist staff members.

In order to qualify for the program, students must be in their senior year of high school at a Maryland public or private school and be at least sixteen years old. Additionally, candidates should express an interest in government and history; exhibit characteristics such as reliability, competence, friendliness, and politeness; dress appropriately for the professional position; have no conduct misdemeanors; and maintain a reputable academic record. Student Page candidates not only had to complete an application provided by the Maryland General Assembly, but they also had to appear before an interview committee made up of their Student Council peers and compose an essay highlighting their reasons for wanting to participate in the program.

Recognize 2015 Holiday Greeting Card Winners

The school board recognized the winners of the 2015 Holiday Greeting Card Contest. The students are as follows:

- Cadence Clayton, Grade 3, Mt. Savage Elementary School
- Bella Williams, Grade 8, Mt. Savage Middle School
- Skylar Spence, Grade 11, Allegany High School

Each student received complimentary copies of their cards for distribution.

Recognize Maryland State Winner in Wendy's High School Heisman Award Program

The school board honored Hayden Lindsey, senior at Mountain Ridge High School, as the Maryland State Winner in the prestigious Wendy's High School Heisman Program. As a state winner, Hayden will receive a silver medal, a Wendy's High School Heisman State Winner patch and a \$50 Wendy's gift card.

The Wendy's High School Heisman Program has recognized exceptional student athletes for more than two decades.

Schedule Changes/Inclement Weather School Closings Update

The Allegany County Public School System considers a number of factors when making the decision to delay or close schools. The first consideration is for the safety of students traveling to and from school, including the outside access to school buildings. Adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice, extreme cold temperatures and sustained wind chill temperatures and the vast differences in terrain from one region of the county to the next affect these decisions as well.

ACPS transportation department personnel survey road conditions as early as 3:30 a.m. on mornings of inclement weather, traveling on routes that are representative of some of the critical areas for safe school bus travel. Staff also consults with the National Weather Service out of Pittsburgh, PA, and Sterling, VA, AccuWeather Service information, State Highway weather stations, and other automated weather stations for weather forecasts and updates. While the school system does not require absolute "bare road" conditions to be in session, ACPS personnel regularly consult with County Roads Departments, the State Highway Administration, local municipality road crews, and surrounding counties' transportation offices to gather the best information available to make a reasonable decision.

On days when road conditions are passable, but extreme cold temperatures present safety concerns, ACPS uses as a baseline for delaying or closing schools for cold temperatures only, air temperature at or below 0° and/or sustained wind chill temperatures of -15° or below. Decisions are made based on current conditions, predicted conditions, how the cold temperatures will affect the operation of school buses, and properly clothed children. However, it is rare that cold temperatures are the only factor being considered when making a decision to delay or close schools.

ACPS policy states that "an emergency closing in the interest of safety for all persons concerned will be announced only after weather forecasts or road conditions indicate this action to be

advisable.” The policy continues regarding delays to state “when weather and road conditions appear too dangerous for school bus travel and information and forecasts predict better weather and safe driving conditions may occur, a decision may be made to open school two or three hours later than usual.”

Announcements concerning delays or closures will be posted on the school system’s website, www.acpsmd.org, no later than 5:30 a.m. Following the website update, in this order, will be updates via School Messenger (all local media outlets receive the announcement via School Messenger), Facebook and Twitter, Schoolsout.com, 9 News Now, Fox 5, WHAG TV, and ABC 7 and News Channel 8. Announcements to close schools during an initial two or three-hour delay will be made no later than 8 a.m. Additionally, morning pre-kindergarten classes are always cancelled when schools are operating on a two or three-hour delay, and no breakfast is served. Early dismissal announcements will be made no later than 11 a.m., which will in turn cancel all sessions of afternoon pre-kindergarten.

Parents are reminded that new this school year was the opt-in requirement to continue receiving notifications via School Messenger. Contact your child’s school to confirm that you have given express consent to be contacted. Please note, any time a mass calling system is utilized, the time it takes for all calls to be completed can range from one to one and a half hours. Opting for a text message or visiting the ACPS website, Facebook or Twitter will always be the fastest forms of notifications.

School closings due to inclement weather may not always automatically cancel after school and evening activities. The Superintendent will consult with the appropriate staff to determine if weather conditions have improved to allow for the activity or event to take place. This decision will most often be made by noon the day of the scheduled activity or event.

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:

- Allegany High School: Staff has submitted the revised request forms to the IAC for review. The architect has identified all of the possible cost saving changes that were proposed during the V/E process. Those items will be included in the revised bid documents. It is expected that bids will be received in February and construction will begin in April or May.
- CIP 2017: Dr. Cox and several school board members and ACPS staff presented an appeal for funding of the Allegany Project and the Mt. Savage roof project to the members of the IAC. The appeal was well received and it is expected that these projects will be approved in future actions by the IAC.
- Braddock Middle Roof Replacement: The IAC has approved the contract award for the roof project. Staff will schedule a meeting with the contractor, architect and school administrators to discuss the schedule and impacts of the project on the school.
- South Penn Air Conditioning: Staff has submitted the project to the IAC for funding as an FY 2016 ASP. ACPS has received approval of the project from IAC, and staff is working with the engineer to complete the bid documents, which will be submitted to the IAC for review.
- Westernport Air Conditioning: Staff is reviewing different options for the installation of air conditioning on the first

floor. Through the wall, units cannot be installed because of the flood panels.

- West Side Gym: Staff has completed the installation of acoustical panels in the gym. These panels were attached to the walls and ceiling to reduce the sound reverberation in the concrete box.

PARCC Update

Marsha Miller, ACPS Coordinator of Accountability, updated the school board on PARCC assessments. ACPS is informing parents of PARCC results in a variety of ways, including at Parent Advisory Council and school board meetings; through PARCC Parent Home Reports; and at school-based PARCC information meetings. Home reports for Algebra I and II and English 10 have already been sent, and home reports for elementary and middle school students will be sent home before Christmas.

Data released today for Maryland’s new elementary and middle school assessments set a new baseline that will help to gauge whether students are on track for the next grade. In ACPS, more than 30% of students in grades 3-8 taking the PARCC English Language Arts/Literacy Assessments last spring scored at a Level 4 and 5 combined – the two highest levels on the PARCC five-point score scale. Nearly 30% of elementary and middle school students attained Level 4 and 5 combined in the mathematics assessment. For students in grades 3 through 8, achieving Level 4 or 5 indicates readiness for coursework in English and math at the next grade level, with the goal of preparing students to enter college or careers upon graduation.

The scores required to meet these thresholds were determined over the summer by Maryland educators and their peers around the country.

Test results show some variations between grades. Fourth grade English scores were the best, with 37.2% of students scoring a 4 or 5, while 6th grade scores were the lowest, with 26.6% of students scoring a 4 or 5. Test results also varied in mathematics, where 32.2% of 3rd graders scored 4 or 5 in mathematics, but just 17% of 8th graders scored a 4 or 5. Only 375 students took the eighth grade mathematics PARCC since the rest of the students took the PARCC Algebra I where 57.3 percent of students scored at a 4 or 5.

Significant score differences exist between student subgroups. For example: For the PARCC ELA test, 21.5% of Allegany County students receiving free or reduced price meals scored at a 4 and 5 as compared to the State combined percent of 20.3. For students receiving special education services, 7.8% of ACPS students scored at levels 4 and 5 as compared to 6.3% at the State level.

For the PARCC mathematics test, 19.1% of Allegany County students receiving free or reduced price meals scored at a 4 and 5 as compared to the State combined percent of 12.9. For students receiving special education services, 8.7% of ACPS students scored at levels 4 and 5 as compared to 5.5% at the State level.

Results from the PARCC assessments will not be used for student or educator accountability this year. In the coming months, the State Board will determine how the data will be used going forward. Future PARCC test results will be available sooner as more students are assessed online. 100% of students in Allegany County took the PARCC assessment online.

Complete PARCC elementary and middle school results for Maryland students will be available at MdReportCard.org.

Next Generation Science Standards and Maryland Integrated Science Assessment Update

ACPS Supervisor of Science, Eric VanSlyke, updated the school board on the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment Design (MISA) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). MISA replaces the HSA/MSA in science. Assessment designs are part of developing an assessment system that reflects science as a unique entity with the practices, crosscutting concepts and disciplinary core ideas. They provide predictors that allow parents and students to collaborate on next steps in science education through a comprehensive integrated science assessment approach in grades 5, 8 and high school. MISA also motivates instruction across all grade levels, minimizes disruption of school schedules by chunking the assessment into instructional blocks of time, and includes collaboration with LEAs in decision-making and selection of Performance Expectations (PEs) throughout the development process.

In grade five, the March assessments will predict students' preparedness for middle school science courses; in grade eight, the March assessments will inform high school science course registration; and in grades nine and ten, the assessments will show high school graduation competencies, and the AP exam will inform science placement in subsequent science courses.

Assessments in grades five and eight will continue to be given in the spring and will incorporate PEs from previous grades. Testing and field-testing will begin in Spring 2017 with no-fault to students (pending the approval of USED and the state board) and would

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for November 10, 2015, Work Session and November 10, 2015, Business Meeting.
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of November 1-30, 2015.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for period of November 1-30, 2015.
4. Receive information technology report for the period of November 1-30, 2015.

The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

be considered a field test year. Standard testing will occur in the spring/summer of 2017.

Assessments in high school will be given when students have completed courses addressing the identified subset of high school PEs, which build on PEs from previous grades. For the MISA at the high school level, the graduation requirement can be met in one of two ways (pending approval of USED and the state board): 1) State assessment given at the completion of the identified subset of the Maryland State Science Standards. Students will be able to take the assessment at any grade in high school if the LEA determines the student has received instruction in that subset of standards and are deemed to be ready for the assessment; or 2) If a student passes an AP exam (with a score of 3 or higher) in specific science content. The MISA will necessitate courses based on the Maryland State Science Standards so that PEs needed for the assessments are addressed in the

students' science course(s).

Students' graduation requirements will be determined based on when they take the high school MISA. Students who have already taken the biology assessment (grades 10, 11, 12) could use this as their high school graduation requirement. Additionally, a biology assessment will continue through 2016-2017 in order to accommodate students who took biology and did not pass. Bridge projects aligned to CLGs would continue through 2016-2017. Bridge projects aligned to the Maryland State Science Standards will be implemented starting in 2019-2020.

ACPS is currently in Phase 3 of a seven-phase implementation of MISA. This school year at the elementary/middle school levels, the science MSA will be given to students in grades 5 and 8 in the Spring of 2016. At the high school level, the biology HSA will be given at the completion of a CLG-aligned biology course.

Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences Update

Mr. VanSlyke also updated the school board on the Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences courses offered in ACPS. They are as follows:

- Grade 9: Principles of Biomedical Sciences
- Grade 10: Human Body Systems
- Grade 11: Medical Interventions
- Grade 12: Biomedical Innovations

In Principles of Biomedical Sciences, implemented last year, students determine the factors that led to the death of a fictional person and investigate lifestyle choices and medical treatments that may have prolonged the person's life. In Human Body Systems, implemented this year, students build organs and tissues on a skeletal manikin, work through interesting real-world cases and often play the role of a biomedical professional to solve medical mysteries.

Beginning next school year, Medical Interventions will be implemented. During this course, students will investigate the variety of interventions involved in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease as they follow the lives of a fictitious family. Finally, Biomedical Innovation, which will be implemented during the 2017-2018 school year, allows students to apply their knowledge and skills to answer questions to solve problems related to the biomedical sciences. They will get the opportunity to work on an independent project and may work with a mentor or advisor from a university, hospital, physician's office or industry.

Enrollment in the biomedical science courses this school year, by school, are as follows:

- Allegany (Florence Saku) – Grade 9, 14 and 15 students; Grade 10, 22 students
- Fort Hill (Stephanie Maddy) – Grade 9, 13 students; Grade 10, 7 students
- Mountain Ridge (Norm DeRosa and Becky Byzon) – Grade 9, 14 and 10 students; Grade 10, 19 students

Legislative Priorities

The school board reviewed the 2016 legislative session core values and legislative priorities, drafted in partnership with the Garrett County Board of Education. They are as follows:

- Adequate and Equitable State Funding
- Local Control
- Mandates Should be Limited and Fully-Funded by the State
- Additional Consideration (pertaining only to Garrett County)

The Boards of Education from both Allegany and Garrett Counties will have a legislative breakfast with the Western Maryland Delegation on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, at Northern Middle School to discuss these core values and priorities.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Adopting Legislative Priorities

The school board voted unanimously to adopt the 2016 Legislative Session Core Values and Priorities, jointly developed by Allegany and Garret Counties. These items, listed above in Work Session Notables, help to prioritize high quality educational opportunities for all students.

Accept Bids for 66-Passenger Bus and 54-Passenger Bus with Lift Gate

Each year the school system solicits bids for school buses that will be purchased after July 1st and will be placed in service for the school year beginning in August. Approval of the bids help to set the next fiscal year's budget for bus purchases. The Supervisor of Transportation has reviewed bid specifications for a 66-passenger bus and a 54-passenger bus with a lift gate. Staff recommends accepting the low bid for the 66-passenger bus from American Bus for \$88,083 and for the 54-passenger bus, also from American Bus, for \$93,679. Both of these bids are lower than those from last year.

The school board accepted these bids.

Consider Approving Health Insurance Budget Amendment

The school system is self-insured for health, dental and vision claims. ACPS pays all the claims and an administrative fee to a third party administrator to administer the plan. Health claims have been increasing, and because the school system is self-insured, must maintain a health insurance reserve, which is a liability on the school board's financial statements. There is a minimum liability that must be maintained of \$2.1 million, which is where ACPS's reserve was at 6/30/15. However, through the end of October, claims have exceeded budget by \$1 million.

The superintendent recommended that \$1.5 million be transferred out of the fund balance to the health insurance reserve in order to recognize increasing claims and to maintain the health insurance reserve at the required minimum at December 31st. This action will decrease the fund balance to \$5 million. Of that, \$1.4 million is being used for the FY2016 budget, leaving \$3.6 million for future budgets and projects.

The school board approved, by a 4-1 vote, this budget amendment; however, since this action increases the total budget, the County Commissioners must approve it.

Approve Assurance of Payment for Scope of Work from Grim & Parker

The school board approved the above motion.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session in January

The school board voted to meet in an Executive Session on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, pending any appeals or unfinished business.

CONSTITUENTS' COMMENTS

Ms. Donna Shaffer, Allegany County Council PTA

Ms. Shaffer addressed the school board on behalf of the Allegany County Council PTA. She noted that the Maryland PTA, which began in 1915, and the Allegany County Council PTA, which began in 1936, both "advocate for every child in the state and county." On behalf of both organizations, Ms. Shaffer presented school board members with a 100th year anniversary pin from the Maryland PTA.

REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Jenna Puffinberger, Student Member of the Board

Jenna updated the school board on the recent General Assembly Session of the Allegany County Association of Student Councils (ACASC) held at Allegany High School. The General Assembly consists of all members of student council from middle and high schools in the county.

During the session, Jenna had the opportunity to update members on PARCC assessments and the status of the Allegany High School Replacement project. Additionally, student council presidents from each school had a chance to give school updates. All schools are active in their schools and communities, holding blood and toy drives and planning dances and other events.

Jake Shade, Allegany County Commissioner, was a guest speaker at the event.

Jenna also informed school board members that ACASC is in the planning stages of holding a mock Presidential debate in order to give students an opportunity to discuss current world issues. This was an idea that was developed by the Superintendent's Student Advisory Board.

NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled Work Session and Business Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. respectively.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Second Reading of Policy for Directory Information (File: JRB)

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to permit distribution of directory information in accordance with existing laws.”

The policy states, “Allegany County Public Schools will disclose designated ‘directory information’ without written consent, unless parents/guardians have advised the District to the contrary in writing by September 30th of each school year.”

Directory information may include:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, awards received or institution attended
- Most recent educational agency or institution attended