

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### ***Recognition of Reading Intervention Committee***

Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, ACPS Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. George Brown, ACPS Coordinator of Professional Learning, introduced members of the Reading Intervention Committee and honored them for their outstanding individual contributions and collaborative efforts. Their dedication and commitment ensured that the committee obtained its goal of establishing guidelines for the implementation of Multi-Tier Systems of Support in reading for ACPS in an effort to provide high-quality research-based reading instruction and interventions to monitor student progress on a frequent basis, and to make informed instructional decisions in order to meet the needs of all students.

Members of the Reading Intervention Committee are as follows: Randi Agetstein, Dee Blank, Stacey Bradley, Dr. George Brown, Karen Brown, Katie Buskirk, Candy Canan, Jackie Enright, Dr. Mary Anne Gilles, Sue Hughes, Kendra Kenney, Jennifer Lancianese, Scott Llewellyn, Dr. Rachel McGann, Debra Metheny, Jennifer Ralston, Jennifer Ritchie, Dr. Charlene Shingler-Beeman, Jodi Stanton, Dr. Jodi Welsch, and Morgan Witmer-Bosley.

### ***ACM Health & Wellness Stress Buster Workshop Presentation***

Several students in Human Service 201 from Allegany College of Maryland presented their capstone project to the school board, which focused on demonstrating skills in the community work, social action, teamwork, oral and written communication, community networking, and program planning. The presenters included Mary Nsangou, Tara Garner, Adrianna Kenney, and Julia Wiland.

National research and local reports by educators and guidance counselors document an increase in behavioral issues, bullying, and classroom management problems due to and increase in mental health challenges from grades pre-k through high school, and trauma resulting from the opioid crisis, poverty, and domestic violence.

The group's project aimed to increase awareness for parents, children, and educators of the importance of mind/body skills for stress reduction, mental health issues, trauma, self-regulation, and academic performance; provide a toolbox of simple and fun stressbuster activities to parents, children, and educators that builds resilience, emotional intelligence, and self-regulation; and present a list of recommendations to the school board of mind/body skills in classroom education.

The Human Service Capstone Project utilized two primary methods: A Stressbusters Fair, which was attended by more than 115 children and parents that provided experiential mind/body skills and activities provided by fifteen community partners; and a documentary film "May I Be At Happy" shown at ACM and attended by 70 educators, students, and community members.

After reviewing the summary of outcomes from these events, the group recommends that the school board provide system wide professional development on the science and application of mind/body skills to classroom instruction including a one day experiential training, school-based viewings and discussions of the documentary, and participation in the Center for Mind/Body Medicine's professional training program. They also

### **Board of Education**

Dr. Sara-Beth Bittinger, President  
Mrs. Tammy Fraley, VP  
Mr. Nicholas Hadley  
Mrs. Laurie Marchini  
Mr. Wayne Foote  
Dr. David Cox, Superintendent  
Ms. Alexis Lashbaugh, SMOB

recommend that a teacher/administrator/student task force be formed to formulate a plan for implementation in the schools. Finally, the group would like the school board to partner with ACM's Community Resilience Team to utilize mind/body skills to build community resilience that addresses the root causes of poverty, trauma, and the opioid crisis.

### ***Candidate Forum Report***

Dr. Bittinger and Dr. Cox hosted a school board member candidate forum in April to share with potential new board members the roles of the school board, which is to employ the superintendent, set the budget, and make policy. The group learned about several COMAR regulations and learned where they could find helpful resources such as BoardDocs, Vimeo, and meeting newsletters. Four candidates attended the forum.

### ***Board Handbook Update***

Dr. Bittinger and Mrs. Marchini created a Board Member Handbook nearly five years ago utilizing information and best practices of several other jurisdictions in the state. This handbook outlines the board's roles and responsibilities, expectations, ethics and codes of conduct, compensation, meeting structures, the evaluation of the superintendent, citizen participation, proper dialogue with the media, staff and the community, and the budget process. Updates to this handbook are currently being made to reflect changes to COMAR over the past several years.

# 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** – The contractor is doing the following:
  - **Area C:** Hanging interior wooden doors; completing the bathroom partitions; completing the casework in the science labs; cleaning classrooms; assembling the greenhouse.
  - **Area B:** Starting to paint the graphics and lines on the gym floors; completed the flooring and wall mats in the wrestling room; completed the ceiling tile in the main hallway; completed the glass rail in the auxiliary gym.
  - **Area A:** Installing ceiling tile in the music area; the stage floor and side balconies in the theatre have been completed and the decorative wood panels for the rear wall will be installed in the next few weeks; the seating in the auditorium has been installed; the glass railings are being installed in the auditorium side balconies; the painting contractor is applying intumescent paint on the steel columns in the main street area; painting ceilings and walls; decorative lights have been installed in the main street corridor.
  - **Site:** Pouring concrete sidewalks at the bus drop off and main entrance; work has begun on the road near Lions' Center, and staff is attempting to schedule the work to minimize disruptions for the Center; Work has begun on the parking lot at the main entrance and the adjacent overflow parking lot.
  - **General:** Installing lights, wiring for intercom, fire alarms, and security systems; work continues in the mechanical rooms where final plumbing and electrical connections are being made.
  - **FF&E:** Staff is preparing the purchase orders for the furniture. Upon reviewing the proposals, several mistakes were identified. Staff issued the purchase orders on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Frost and Mt. Savage Roof Projects:** Staff has submitted all of the forms to the PSCP for the two projects. The projects will be bid in May with work beginning in early July.
- **FY 2019 CIP:** The IAC made the 90% recommendations for funding to the BPW on February 26<sup>th</sup>. The recommendations include \$3,845,000 for the request for Allegany. Funding has not been recommended for the Bel Air roof project. Final funding approval will be made by the

BPW by the end of May.

- **Elementary Schools Facilities Study:** The FEA team returned to Allegany County on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> to conduct evaluations of Westmar and Mt. Savage Middle Schools.

## ***School Safety Summit Report***

Dr. Ben Brauer, ACPS Supervisor of Safety and Security, recently attended statewide school safety summit in Annapolis along with Lt. Rocky Reed of the Cumberland Police Department and Eugene Pustolski, ACPS Pupil Personnel Worker. Dr. Brauer updated the school board on several highlights from the recent summit:

- There was a presentation by the gentleman who was part of building a report on the risk assessment process that ACPS utilizes, which reassured Dr. Brauer to know that the school system's process aligns with how the process should go. The Maryland Center for School Safety will continue to reevaluate these processes.
- Officials from St. Mary's County gave a presentation on their recent school shooting that occurred in March. The group was very honest and forthcoming about their preparation for such an incident and provided the summit with lessons learned. Staff also shared ideas on how to improve upon procedures, protocols, and trainings with staff and students. ACPS currently implements similar recommended procedures and training and have had many in place for several years.
- There were various legislative updates as follows:
  - In September 2018 a yearly report, which is yet to be developed, that all systems will be required to provide outlining overall school safety initiatives and efforts in place.
  - Safety evaluations will be due in June 2019 on each facility and building within a school system. Details of these evaluations are TBD.
  - In August 2020, a new yearly reporting, similar to bullying and gang activity, will be required outlining the number of school threats, lock downs, and hours spent on drills and actual threats. Dr. Brauer feels confident that the ACPS IT department will be able to compile this data without much additional work.
  - There was a lot of discussion about SROs and armed personnel within schools. ACPS is currently ahead of the State in armed personnel. 77% of schools in the State have armed SROs. 100% of the SROs and safety officers in ACPS are armed. ACPS's student to SRO ratio is also ahead of that of the State. Legislation will require SRO training through the Maryland Center for School

Safety. All ACPS SROs currently participate in training from the National Association of School Resource Officers.

- Legislation will require school emergency plans be shared with law enforcement, fire, EMS, and emergency management personnel. ACPS already provides these organizations with access to floor plans and critical incident plans on a secure server.
- There will be information forthcoming on grants for safety assessments for FY 2019.

### **Finance Report**

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on the following financial information as of April 2018:

- Legal fees continue to trend well
- There has been a reduction in the number of substitutes needed
- Nonpublic placements are trending well and are nearly \$600,000 ahead of last year
- Transportation costs are good relative to last year; however, the budget is up a bit likely due to the cost of fuel
- Utilities are trending well and have a positive variance from last year
- Healthcare costs saw an increase in claims last month but are still doing better relative to this time last year

### **Technology Report**

Mrs. Nil Grove, ACPS Chief IT Officer, updated the school board on the following information technology highlights for the month of April:

- Report cards were posted on April 13<sup>th</sup> to the Aspen portal for the third marking period.
- User logs indicate that on the day of the end of the marking period, more students/parents viewed Aspen than near the date the report cards were published. This indicates that students/parents already know what grades are and they don't rely on the report card to keep up to date on student progress.
- Technicians prepared for and provided assistance with the first AAPPL (foreign language) online testing.
- With the help of Melissa Kaye and Jason Huber, staff provided combined council with a presentation on the use of Hangouts on Air as a replacement to morning announcements via a PA system.
- Visited the new Allegany to see how the furniture and ALL concept will work in the science classrooms. Staff has a plan to outfit those rooms as ALL classrooms. Staff also discussed the computer labs and have a plan for those as well.
- Submitted the Preliminary Program Description for ARC funding to expand ALL to more elementary schools in the 2018-2019 school year.
- Skyline worked on April 26<sup>th</sup> to repair the fiber link on Route 36 between Westernport and Mountain Ridge. This loop was down for about three months due to fiber damage in that area. The link was restored and ACPS now has a full ring again.
- A former Aspen developer created a PARCC composite scores sheet for school counselors.
- Closed March enrollment with 8,572 students. This is down 24 from last

## PUBLIC COMMENT

### **Ms. Melanie DeMoss**

Ms. DeMoss addressed the school board as a kindergarten/grade one teacher at West Side Elementary School. She had the opportunity to attend the Stressbusters Fair and to view the documentary, "May I Be Happy". She agrees that mindfulness in the classroom is very important as it has a positive effect on students.

In her class at West Side, Ms. DeMoss uses calming and breathing exercises as well as visualization techniques for transitions and instructions. The goal is to introduce children to mindful techniques so that they can use them when they see fit. Ms. DeMoss also stressed her support for ACM's program and for helping lead the mindful movement in the community.

### **Ms. Nayano Taylor-Newman and Ms. Lydia Martin**

Ms. Taylor-Newman and Ms. Martin addressed the school board as members of the New Neighbors' Refugee Resettlement Task Force, a group of more than 40 members who want to assist refugees to settle successfully in the U.S. They believe that the Cumberland area can offer refugees a good home, while at the same time benefitting from new residents who are keen to be good neighbors, workers, and citizens.

The group would like the school board's support of their vision: "Through our collaboration with a refugee resettlement agency, people from refugee backgrounds settle in the Cumberland area, and lead secure and productive lives as members of the wider community. The resettlement program meets the needs of the refugees themselves, as well as the needs of the local community for new residents and workers."

month and 54 from this time last year.

### ***Evaluation of Students – Grading Policy Regulations Review***

The school board reviewed 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 is committed to maintaining rigorous performance and achievement standards for all students and to providing a fair 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.”

## **BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

### ***Tammy Fraley***

Mrs. Fraley noted that it can be difficult to process all of the legislative changes and updates coming from the recent session; however, MABE offers on its website a document that summarizes all of the changes to make it easier to understand. She also highlighted again that as a school board member, their role is to set the budget and make policy. Mrs. Fraley highlighted the importance of school safety and security and noted that the school board has made it a priority in ACPS. She also commended staff and students for the activities they were participating in recognizing Mental Health Awareness week.

### ***Laurie Marchini***

Mrs. Marchini asked current school board members and candidates in the upcoming election, Nicholas Hadley and Wayne Foote, to help correct misinformation being shared about ACPS in the public. One example is that of the ex-officio, which was removed several years ago at the request of the Allegany County Commissioners, not the school board. She also noted that school board members’ contact information is and has always been published on the school system’s website. Mrs. Marchini noted that ACPS tops a list compiled by a research company of schools adjusting well to PARCC standards and performing well on these exams. She also read a list of several other ACPS highlights that she hopes that the media will report on.

### ***Wayne Foote***

Mr. Foote attended the Accolades Banquet and commended the students for their accomplishments. He also serves as the board’s representative on the Career Center’s Local Advisory Committee and in doing so has learned so much about the numerous groups that work together to prepare students for the workforce.

### ***Nicholas Hadley***

Mr. Hadley attended the Board of Education candidate forum. He also took a moment to clarify confusion surrounding the DPEC/Tyler Technologies conversion.

## **STUDENT BOARD MEMBER UPDATES**

Ms. Alexis Lashbaugh updated the school board on the following items:

- The final Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council meeting was held and the group pitched some ideas regarding school safety and mental health that may be included in an upcoming student survey.
- Alexis, along with 65 other seniors, attended the Achievement Awards Banquet.

### ***Dr. Sara-Beth Bittinger***

Dr. Bittinger noted that the school level findings from the staff engagement survey are still being processed to share with principals. After they have had time to review the information they will be better prepared to plan for specific interventions to address concerns. Dr. Bittinger also presented Dr. Cox’s assistant, Dixie Heavener, with a certificate of recognition and a gift, in honor of Administrative Assistants’ day.