

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY: THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### ***Student Recognition – Maryland Seal of Bi-literacy***

The school board recognized the following students for achieving the necessary English and World Language assessment scores to be eligible for the Maryland Seal of Bi-literacy:

- Umaila Fatima, Allegany
- Morgan Edwards, Mountain Ridge
- Acisey Barrera, Allegany
- Morgan Cuthbertson, Mountain Ridge
- Kendra Harpold, Mountain Ridge
- Dresden Kershaw, Mountain Ridge

### ***2018 Superintendent's Advance***

Dr. Cox updated the school board on the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Superintendent's Advance held July 31-August 2 at Mountain Ridge High School. All principals, assistant principals, and instructional supervisors attended and participated in the Advance, which was organized by Dr. George Brown, Coordinator of Professional Development, and Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, Chief Academic Officer.

The Advance began with a focused study of Dr. Carol Dweck's "The Growth Mindset" book which begins with the central idea that we don't have to accept a fixed mindset, and with determination, perseverance, and hard work, we can all change our perspectives to do better learning and increase productivity that can then be applied to student achievements.

The group also continued their work on the Gradual Release of Responsibility and the Universal Design

for Learning (GRRUDL), which is the instructional model utilized in ACPS. Mrs. Leslie Roser, teacher at Parkside Elementary School, also led the group in a lesson that encompassed growth mindset and GRRUDL which was modeled after her classroom lessons.

Finally, staff in attendance also began to unpack the results of the staff and student engagement surveys in an effort to help guild individual School Improvement Plans and the district's Master Plan.

### ***2018-2019 School Year Overview***

Dr. Cox highlighted several important dates in regards to the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. The Allegany High School ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony was held on August 20<sup>th</sup>, with Maryland Governor, Larry Hogan, in attendance. Public tours of the new school are scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 5-8 p.m. and on August 24<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The first day of school for teachers is August 22<sup>nd</sup>, and this year ACPS welcomes 46 new teachers. The first day of school for students is August 29<sup>th</sup> with a three-hour early dismissal.

New this year, Fort Hill High School will pilot a new block schedule.

Dr. Cox will also take his annual first day of school bus ride, and this year he will join students on their way to Allegany High School.

### **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. Eesha Bokil, SMOB

### ***Community Eligibility Provision Schools Update***

The school system has qualified four schools for participation in the Community Eligibility Provision this school year. All students at John Humbird, Westernport, George's Creek, and South Penn Elementary Schools will receive free breakfast and lunch as a result of this provision of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act.

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and districts in low-income areas. CEP, which is based on a school's FARMs percentage, allows high poverty schools to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

The four eligible schools represent those with the highest percentage of students qualifying to receive free or reduced price meals.

## MAINTENANCE & CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Mr. Vince Montana, ACPS Director of Facilities, updated the school board on the following projects:

- Allegany High School – Interior:
  - The final inspection of the elevator was completed on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The elevator is now in service for use.
  - The theater, including the sound and dimming systems, has been completed.
  - Programming and testing the HVAC controls continues throughout the building. There are more than 10,000 different points that are monitored and/or controlled by the system. Calibrating and synchronizing all of the sensors, transmitters, and equipment will continue over the next two months.
  - All of the classroom furniture has been delivered. The remaining furniture will be delivered on August 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - The architect has begun the punch list. This is a detailed inspection that documents installations that are incomplete or incorrect or incidental damage to finishes or materials. Corrective work will continue over the next two weeks.
- Allegany High School – Exterior:
  - Paving is complete. The road to the Lions' Center was completed along with the loading dock area.
  - The all-weather track surface has been installed. The contractor began painting the lines on August 8<sup>th</sup>. This work will be completed by August 11<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting.
- Allegany High School – General:
  - The Health Department inspection of the kitchen is complete. A few minor issues were noted on the inspection report. Those issues have been resolved.
  - The maintenance department staff is installing wiring and electrical circuits for two additional computer labs. The furniture for those labs will arrive in early September.
- Frost & Mt. Savage Roof Projects:
  - The Request for Approval of Contract Award for the projects has been submitted to the IAC.
- Miscellaneous:
  - Bids were received for the replacement of the video display at Greenway Avenue Stadium. The recommendation for contract award appears on the meeting agenda.
  - Demolition of the house adjacent to John Humbird is underway. New fencing will be installed when the site grading is finished.
  - ACPS staff is coordinating with the City of Cumberland and a contractor to replace the water meter, piping and valves at Fort Hill. The City has scheduled the meter replacement but the main water piping and valves in the school are original to the 1936 construction.

### ***Monthly Financial Report***

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on financial information for July 2018. Only one month into FY 2019, nearly 10% of the budget has been spent on legal fees, and just over 10% on equipment purchases. Utilities make up about 3% of budget spending to date. Healthcare costs are on track relative to last year, and there has been a reduction in healthcare claims. This is likely attributable to the healthy cash balance of \$39,430,666 on hand, an increase of approximately \$6,000 from this time last year.

### ***Monthly IT Highlights for July***

Mrs. Nil Grove, ACPS Chief IT Officer, updated the school board on the following department highlights from July:

- Comcast Essentials were distributed to schools. This offers a greatly reduced rate on Internet and computers (form home use) provided by Comcast. ACPS has participated for more than five years.
- Received ARC grant funding to help with the costs

associated with the Active Learning Labs for South Penn, Northeast, Flintstone, and Parkside.

- Of the 531 students entered in PreReg School by elementary school secretaries, only 298 became active when rolling over into the new school year August 1<sup>st</sup>. The other 233 students did not have their PMF-1 sent in to be marked as complete and coming.
- Provided the yearly software upgrade to the AS/400 system.
- OLA IT Network and Security audit requests for network, firewalls, and password controls.
- Worked with the team that will provide the Convocation Live Streaming production at the new Allegany High School to include Greg Honeycutt, who has this expertise.
- The telephone system upgrade was completed for the ShoreTel/Mitel systems. Installations then proceeded at the new Allegany, John Humbird, and Mountain Ridge.
- Networking equipment installs for the new Allegany to

include wireless access points, security cameras, and network closet equipment such as the network switches and UPS units were completed.

- Met with USAC/Erate analysts and provided feedback on the use of the funds for instructional purposes. Forum of 35 business analysts at the FCC in Washington, D.C.
- Reported the main office phone spoofing issues to the FCC.

## REPORTS & UPDATES

### ***Student Member of the Board Report***

New Student Member of the Board, Eesha Bokil, updated the school board on the following:

- ACASC is planning a picnic scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>. At the event, they will stress helping the community by utilizing workshop topics (volunteering, cooperation, public speaking) in daily interactions.
- The ACASC Executive Board is working on a social awareness campaign in cooperation with the Health Department that will focus on topics including underage drinking and non-medical use of prescription drugs to educate students and strive towards awareness and action.
- ACASC is implementing a new environmental committee with representatives from each middle and high school as well as planning service projects for the upcoming school year.
- Eesha had the opportunity to attend an MASC executive meeting where attendees voted on this year's state charity. The result was the Believe in Tomorrow's Children Foundation.

### ***Board Member Updates***

- ***Dr. Sara-Beth Bittinger, President:*** Dr. Bittinger read the following letter she submitted to the Editor of the Cumberland Times-News – “Please accept the following clarifications regarding recent local “fake news.” As a member of the elected Allegheny County Board of Education for the past two terms, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the facts in response to some inaccurate allegations made by candidates running for the school board.
  1. School board members are encouraged to visit schools. They are expected to let the Superintendent or principal know they are coming prior to the visit as a professional courtesy and also to avoid disruption of instructional time. All visitors, including board members, are expected to sign in at the main office. This is standard safety protocol practiced in schools across the country (Policy File: BH).
  2. All members of the current board support and realize the importance of school resource officers. Safety for our students and employees is our number one priority. We continue to advocate for funding and seek funding sources (local, state, and federal) to support having a school resource officer in each school.
  3. It is a current board goal to seek efficiencies within the operations of the school system in an effort to reduce class size, particularly in K-2. We have implemented several cost-saving measures during the previous decade including the renegotiation

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### ***Information Technology Responsible Use Regulations Review (File: JIK)***

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy, whose purpose is to “establish the foundation for responsible use of information technology by ACPS students.”

The policy states, “Information 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. IT 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. Responsible use of IT is required of students whether using personal devices, school system devices, or school system programs.

## NEW BUSINESS

### ***Consider Approval of Bid to Replace Video Display at Greenway Avenue Stadium***

Bids were received for the Greenway Avenue Stadium video display replacement on August 6, 2018. The existing video display has become unreliable and repair parts are no longer available. The Greenway Avenue Stadium Capital Improvements Committee recommends accepting the bid as submitted by Time Technologies, Inc. of Roanoke, VA, in the amount of \$55,085.38.

The school board voted to accept this bid.

### ***Vote to Meet in Executive Session on August 27<sup>th</sup>***

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on August 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss any unfinished business or pending any appeals.

of healthcare costs, selective replacement of positions, and reallocation of resources based on changing program needs. The number of employees at the Central Office on Washington Street has decreased by a dozen positions since 2009.

4. School board members, per policy file: BH, are encouraged to have open dialogue and communicate with staff, teachers, and all employees of the school system. It is never appropriate for board members to discuss personnel matters. Board member contact information is listed on the Allegany County Public School System homepage, [www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org).

Thank you for taking the time to read/listen to these clarifications. Please research all candidates to learn what each one is proposing to do if elected. Ask about their student-friendly ideas and how they propose we sustain and grow our system and community. These are important questions, and community awareness is critical.

- **Tammy Fraley, Vice President:** Mrs. Fraley is a representative on the MABE board, and she indicated that meetings will begin for the new school year soon. She will also be presenting the Chinese Immersion Program at the MABE conference in October. Mrs. Fraley had the opportunity to attend a meeting for the federal commission on school safety with her husband, School Resource Officer Chris Fraley. Officer Fraley was asked to speak at the event on the topics of school threats and active shooter training. Officer Fraley is also the Region II Director for the National Association of School Resource Officers.
- **Laurie Marchini, Member:** Mrs. Marchini had the opportunity to greet the new teachers at a recent orientation, and she was very impressed by the combination of brand new teachers as well as the diverse experience of others. She feels very optimistic about the upcoming school year.
- **Mr. Nicholas Hadley, Member:** Mr. Hadley also had the opportunity to welcome new teachers at a recent orientation, and was equally impressed with the lack of experience and noted that Allegany County is very fortunate to have them.

## CONSTITUENTS' COMMENTS

### **Dr. Terry Kasekamp**

Dr. Kasekamp addressed the school board to discuss the student engagement survey and the FEA study. She gave members a brief background so they could better understand her concerns. Dr. Kasekamp is a current candidate for the school board, with a doctorate in educational leadership and a Master's degree in counseling and psychology. She was intrigued by the results in the mental health section of the survey, notably that 18% of middle school students and 29% of high school students acknowledged struggling with mental health issues. She indicated that mental health is a broad category, and feels that ACPS needs more clarity on the frequency in which students struggle with issues as well as the coping strategies that they are aware of. Dr. Kasekamp also feels that there needs to be more follow-up questions on the topic of suicide. She concluded her comments to the school board on this topic by inquiring as to whether or not there is a plan in place to develop a more specific assessment that would provide more in-depth analysis of the mental health of students.

Dr. Kasekamp indicated that she read the FEA study, and to her, it wasn't clear how the input from the Blue Ribbon Commission and the public was actually used in respect to FEA's recommendations to close schools. She noted that there was little quantitative and qualitative data provided in respect to the direct impact closing schools would have on school loyalty, district level programs, special needs resources, health and wellness, and school security. Dr. Kasekamp also noted that there was no information provided in terms of the consideration of alternative uses of space being utilized for early childhood or after school programs. She concluded her remarks by asking the school board what the plan for full implementation of what FEA calls Phase V of the study – stakeholder and public input. Dr. Kasekamp feels that this phase needs to be completed so that an elected board and county commission can have all of the necessary information on hand before deciding to consolidate schools.