

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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Election of Officers

The election of officers was held in an earlier Open Session just prior to the school board convening in Executive Session. Mr. Robert Farrell was elected as President in a 3-2 vote, and Dr. David Bohn was elected as Vice President, also in a 3-2 vote.

INSTRUCTIONAL & DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

IT Monthly Highlights

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

- Researching a modification of the training for Interactive Whiteboards to include more video and online courses, not only the face-to-face sessions.
- Working with ACM on grant-funded computer equipment to supplement the dual enrollment/early college courses. ACM plans to write the grant.
- The Field Trip Request form was converted to an electronic format. Schools are field testing the form to include electronic signatures.
- Closed November enrollment with 8,537 students – down 8 from October.
- Researching online timesheet systems that work with the Tyler/Munis system.
- Active Learning Labs are in full operation at South Penn. Allegany's labs are awaiting wiring.
- TV channel equipment is beginning to fail. Researching ways to

maintain it with no expense to the BOE.

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on selected unrestricted expenditure variances for the school system, to date. Several of these category items include substitute teachers, equipment purchases, the tuition for non-public placements, transportation, utilities, retirements, and healthcare costs. All or most of these categories are trending well compared to last year, and several that may have a negative variance from last year are still on budget for the year.

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

Policy Regulations

- ***Grade Point Average (File: IKC-R1)***
The school board voted to table hearing the updates on this policy's regulations until further review by newly hired interim legal counsel.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Repealing Video Surveillance in School Facilities Policy and Regulations (File: ECAA)

The school board voted to table a vote on this policy until further review by newly hired interim legal counsel.

Consider Second Reading of Proper and Acceptable Use of Surveillance Cameras Policy (File: ECAF)

The school board voted to table a vote on this policy until further review by newly hired interim legal counsel.

Consider Second Reading of Public Gifts and Donations Policy (File: KCD)

The school board voted to table a vote on this policy until further review by newly hired interim legal counsel.

Consider Adopting FY 2020 Operating Budget Priorities

The school board was provided with prior years' budget development priorities as a reference for creating FY2020 priorities. These priorities assist the Superintendent and staff in developing a budget that aligns with the school board's priorities. The school board voted 4-1 to table this discussion until the new members have had time to generate ideas.

Consideration of Meeting Dates and Times

The school board voted 3-2 to change future school board meeting dates and times to the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m., and the locations of these meetings will rotate between each high school and the Career Center. There will be a few exceptions to the meeting dates where scheduling conflicts arise. This new meeting format will be done on a trial basis.

Consider First Reading of Grade Point Average Policy (File: IKC)

The school board voted to table a vote on this policy until further review by newly hired interim legal counsel.

Consideration of Status of Current Legal Counsel

The school board voted 3-2 in Executive Session to remove the school board's long-time attorney, Mr. Gary Hanna. In the later Open Meeting the school board explained that this decision was made so that a new firm could review a resolution passed by the previous school board to remove Mr. Wayne Foote from office.

Consider Appointing Geppert, McMullen, Paye & Getty to Serve as Board of Education Attorneys

The school board voted 3-2 in Executive Session to appoint the law firm of Geppert, McMullen, Paye & Getty to serve as attorneys for the school board on an interim basis until an RFP for service can be developed. Mr. Mike Llewellyn was introduced at the Open Meeting as the interim legal counsel to the school board.

Consideration to Direct New Counsel to Review Resolution on Wayne Foote and Provide Options Moving Forward

The school board voted 3-2 to direct their new legal counsel to review the resolution passed by the previous school board to remove Mr. Wayne Foote. School board member, Mrs. Tammy Fraley, noted prior to the vote that she had received notification from the board's Ethics Panel

indicating that they felt that Mr. Foote should recuse himself from voting on this motion as it would be a direct conflict of interest. School board President, Mr. Bob Farrell, indicated that since he was permitted to vote on the resolution he would be permitted to vote on this. Mrs. Fraley did note that the Ethics Panel also believed that Mr. Foote should have recused himself from the original vote as well; however, no discussion occurred at that time.

Consider Creation of New Position/Hire for Head of School Security

The school board voted (3 approved, 2 abstained) to direct the Superintendent to review the possibility of creating a new position for the Head of School Security who would be charged with placing a School Resource Officer in each school in Allegany County.

Discuss Solutions/Situation of Students Eating Lunch While Sitting on the Floor at Allegany

Several teachers, the interim principal, and a student from Allegany High School spoke to the school board regarding their concerns. All indicated that any student at the school who sits on the floor to eat is doing so by choice and not because of a lack of seating in the cafeteria and on Main Street. Mrs. Heidi Laupert, interim principal, also noted that their cafeteria staff only serves about 270 lunches on average, which is far less than enrollment, and have no trouble doing so. Additionally, the school's head custodian prefers cleaning up after only one lunch shift as opposed to four as in previous years. School board members were invited and encouraged to visit the school during the lunchtime Power Hour to see for themselves the success of the new format.

Discuss the Board's Communication Policy

The school board voted (3 approved, 2 abstained) to refer this policy back to the policy committee for review in an effort to clarify what some school board members felt was confusing language. The purpose of the current policy is "to prescribe how the Board and individual Board members communicate with the public and employees."

Discuss Board's Nepotism Policy

The school board voted 3-2 to table this policy until further review by the policy committee and the newly hired interim legal counsel. The purpose of the current policy is "to avoid the harmful impact of conflicts of interest on the school system and to provide guidance with regard to the employment, transfer, supervision,

NEW BUSINESS CONT.

evaluation, or promotion of immediate family members of an employee, whether permanent or temporary, or a member of the Board of Education.”

Discuss Board’s Dress Code Policy for Teachers

The school board voted 3-2 to have the policy committee and the newly hired legal counsel review and revise this policy to allow for some relief in the dress code to possibly include casual days. Mrs. Fraley noted that these revisions would need to appear in the regulations as opposed to the policy. The purpose of the current policy, Staff Dress Code, is “to provide employees with guidance on professional dress.”

Discuss Board’s Ethics Committee to Consider Using Allegany County Ethics Committee

No motion was made on this item at the suggestion of the school board’s newly hired legal counsel, who indicated that the law requires school boards to have and utilize their own ethics committee. Part of the policy statement notes, “For the purpose of guarding against improper influence, the Board of Education of Allegany County endorses and adopts this policy and the following regulation (File: BCA-R) that will require certain school officials to disclose their financial affairs and to set minimum standards for their conduct of school system business, according to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article §15-811 to §15-815 and the Maryland State Ethics Commission.”

Discuss Board’s Policy Committee

As per the school board’s policy, School Board Policy Process (File: BG), a policy committee’s initial membership is designated by the president of the school board, in cooperation with the superintendent. Dr. Cox and Bob Farrell will review the composition of the policy committee, which typically includes the superintendent, legal counsel, two school board members, the president of ACEA, and administrative staff as needed.

Discuss Arranging Meeting with Current School Board and County Commissioners to Look at Overlapping Services

No motion or vote was needed for the school board president to reach out to the County Commissioners to arrange a meeting. Mr. Farrell indicated that he would proceed with scheduling one.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session January 18, 2019, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on January 18, 2019, at 2:30 p.m. at the Central Office. The next public Open Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 29, 2019, at 6 p.m. The new location has yet to be determined.

REPORTS & BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Eesha Bokil, SMOB

Ms. Bokil updated the school board on the following:

- The ACASC Executive Board is in the process of planning workshops for their upcoming General Assembly, scheduled for January 30, 2019. The overarching theme for the event will focus on mental health. Workshop topics will include mental health and parliamentary procedure. She explained that it was important for them to include parliamentary procedure in preparation for the next MASC meeting, which will be the legislative session for the group.
- ACASC is planning to participate in more service projects within the community.

Mr. Wayne Foote

Mr. Foote noted that he has the opportunity to assist at schools with holiday meals, and was pleased to see that students going through the lines exhibit good manners and thanked parents and grandparents for teaching students how to be

polite. Students are also well-behaved at athletic events, and student athletes and coaches should be commended for their work ethic. He also noted, however, that he would like to see more discipline and respect within the school system and hopes that the new school board can accomplish that.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley noted that she too visits many schools, both as a parent and school board member, and applauds the teachers and staff who work with students on cafeteria behavior. She will be judging an upcoming FBLA event later next week; attending an upcoming MABE Board of Directors meeting, attending the annual PACE conference; attending the National School Board Association's Symposium on Equity.

Mrs. Debra Frank

Mrs. Frank thanked everyone in attendance at the meeting for coming and those taking the time to speak. She noted that she is very proud of the school system and the positive impact ACPS has had on many families. She also stated that she is aware of the great trust that has been placed in her to move the school system forward, and she assured the public that her resolve to do that is stronger than ever.

Mr. Robert Farrell

Mr. Farrell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and hopes that the public continues to come to school board meetings because he wants to hear what constituents have to say. He also thanked the Career Center and staff for hosting this month's meeting.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Jackie Samms

Mrs. Samms addressed the school board to stress how important and complex their job is, and hopes that they can work together for the good of the school system.

Ms. Rachel Reeves

Ms. Reeves addressed the school board to urge them to place priority for educational funds on innovative programs such as PTECH, Active Learning Labs, and the Chinese Partial Immersion Program, and to work hard to continue to develop and implement more innovative programs.

Mrs. Kim Sloane, President ACEA

Mrs. Sloane addressed the school board to relay some thoughts from the association's members which included the hope for better conversations with school board members; better classroom resources; adequate number of certified educators and trained educational support personnel; the continued work to lower student/teacher ratios; and better pay. Members also look forward to a future of open communication to do what's best for students.

Mr. Evan West, UniServe Director ACEA

Mr. West addressed the board to first voice his concern about the change in the agenda from what was published as well as a change in meeting dates and times, all of which makes it difficult for members to plan for and attend. He was also concerned that decisions were being made without the input from members and constituents. He assured the school board that ACEA will work collaboratively with them on areas of agreement, which include improving staff morale, improving school safety, and transparency. And he strongly urged that the school board work in collaboration with ACEA.

Mr. Brian White, Mrs. Amy Llewellyn, Mrs. Heidi Laupert, Ms. Claire

As noted under "New Business", all who spoke on this topic dicated that any student at the school who sits on the floor to

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS CONT.

eat is doing so by choice and not because of a lack of seating in the cafeteria and on Main Street. Mrs. Heidi Laupert, interim principal, also noted that their cafeteria staff only serves about 270 lunches on average, which is far less than enrollment, and have no trouble doing so. Additionally, the school's head custodian prefers cleaning up after only one lunch shift as opposed to four as in previous years. Mrs. Amy Llewellyn, school counselor at Allegany, also noted that the amount of referrals given during lunchtime as well as the number of students asking to eat in her office has decreased significantly as the result of Power Hour. School board members were invited and encouraged to visit the school during the lunchtime Power Hour to see for themselves the success of the new format.

Mr. Jeff Metz

Mr. Metz addressed the school board regarding the proposed change to the regulations in the policy on Class Rankings/Grade Point Average (File: IKC-R1), specifically as it relates to AP courses. He is concerned that requiring a final exam in addition to the AP exam may hurt a student's GPA. The policy was tabled later in the meeting until further review by the newly hired interim legal counsel and a new policy committed can be formed.

Mrs. Carmen Jackson, President Local NAACP

Mrs. Jackson addressed the school board regarding two issues. First, she indicated that she was very concerned by the school board's decision to elect officers and remove long-time legal counsel, Gary Hanna, before the 4 p.m. meeting, at which time both were to be addressed according to the published agenda. Additionally, she is concerned with students who walk to and from Allegany High School and their safety in doing so without sidewalks along many of the roads.

Ms. Joy Kroeger-Mappes

Ms. Kroeger-Mappes addressed the school board because she is concerned that students in Allegany County Public Schools have good role models in their school board members and that they be educated to be critical thinkers. She also wants the school board to demonstrate that it is important to be honest and forthcoming and to have a very solid moral compass. Ms. Kroeger-Mappes urged the school board to be exemplary citizens and examples for ACPS students.

Mrs. Breann D'Atri

Mrs. D'Atri addressed the school board to voice her concern and displeasure at the their decision to hold the election of officers prior to their Executive Session rather than at the time it was published to be discussed as well as to move the legal counsel discussion to the Executive Session as they were two items she had wanted to hear discussion about. She felt that it lacked transparency and was a disservice to constituents.