

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### ***Recognition of Student Volunteers of the Month and Service Star Recipients***

The school board recognized the following Student Volunteers of the Month, who were nominated by their teachers for demonstrating outstanding service to their school and/or community:

- September – Eesha Bokil and Jocelyn Weston
- October – Hana Chitsaz and Aisa Wrights
- November – Kelsey Darber and John Toothaker
- December – Rachel Hare and Omaer Naeem
- January – Eleanor Browne and Coleton Furlow
- February – Madison McKay and Britney Zheng
- March – Caylin Salmon and Luke Vinci

The following students were also recognized for being Service Stars: Wil Brauer, Keri Twigg, Bailey Cook, and Andrew Dittmer.

### ***Recognition of ACASC Executive Board Members and Advisors***

The school board recognized the following Executive Board Members of the Allegany County Association of Student Councils and their advisors:

- Eesha Bokil, Student Member of the Board
- Jocelyn Ewston, ACASC President
- John Toothaker, ACASC Parliamentarian
- Omaer Naeem, ACASC Public Relations Officer
- Coleton Furlow, ACASC Secretary
- Kelsey Darber, ACASC Second Vice President
- Rachel Hare, Fort Hill Representative
- Madison McKay, Career Center Representative
- Hana Chitsaz, Mountain Ridge Representative
- Beth Harper, Washington Middle School Advisor
- Chase Crislip, Braddock Middle School Advisor
- John Shaw, Mt. Savage Middle School Advisor
- Christon Wilson, Westmar Middle School Advisor
- Tammy Twigg, Allegany High School Advisor
- Megan Bittinger, Mountain Ridge High School Advisor
- Brenda Blackburn, Career Center Advisor
- Alex Grieves and Yvonne Imes, Fort Hill High School Advisors

### ***Recognition of Superintendent's Student Advisory Council Members***

The school board recognized the following students, who serve as members of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council: Eesha Bokil, Alyssa Bonner, Eleanor Browne, Hana Chitsaz, Coleton Furlow, Hannah Greeley, Demara Green, Madison McKay, Omaer Naeem, Caylin Salmon, Lindsay Sites, Abigayle Spangler, John Toothaker, Kira Twigg, Jocelyn Weston, and Britney Zheng.

### ***Introduce Allegany County Teacher of the Year***

The school board recognized the 2019-2020 Allegany County Teacher of the Year, Sarah Llewellyn of Westernport Elementary School. At Westernport, Sarah is an active member

## 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

of the PBIS team and the Partnership Action Team. She has actively created an environmentally sustainable school culture by coordinating the TREX recycling program, constructing a native pollinator garden, and piloting a school lunch composting program. She has taught reading intervention, second, third and fifth grades during her 14-year tenure in ACPS.

### ***Present Proclamation***

#### ***Recognizing Library Media Month***

The school board presented a proclamation recognizing April 2019 as Library Media Month. The library media program is designed to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The role of the library media specialist is to provide leadership and expertise necessary to ensure that the library media program is an integral part of the instructional program of the school. Library media specialists teach the skills of locating and using information through traditional resources and new technologies, to provide literature appreciation activities, and to guide and encourage content and recreational reading to every student.

Lifelong learning begins and is systematically developed through the library media curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools, and the library media program contributes to the individual growth and development of all students while fostering both excellence and equity in education. Mrs. Stevenson showed a video that highlights the

roles and responsibilities of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Media Specialist, which can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/315673269>.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

The school board voted to repeal the above policy, whose purpose is “to provide a safe and secure environment and deter inappropriate behavior or illegal activity in school facilities.”

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

The school board voted to approve the second reading of the above policy, which replaced the repealed policy and whose purpose is “to set guidelines for the use and viewing of video/audio surveillance.” The policy states, “The BOE recognizes that maintaining the safety and security of students, staff, and district property is best implemented with a multifaceted approach. The Board supports the use of technology such as video/audio surveillance cameras. Video/audio surveillance may be utilized in and around schools on ACPS property and transportation vehicles. Cameras may be equipped with audio recording capabilities as well. Video/audio surveillance is subject to applicable laws pertaining to such use. The district shall comply with applicable law related to maintaining video/audio recordings. Video/audio monitoring is not permitted in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Recording of teacher instruction for purposes of completing a personnel performance evaluation is not intended to be covered by this policy. Recording of students for educational purposes is not covered by this policy. Viewing of video/audio surveillance shall only be done by authorized persons for authorized purposes.”

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

The school board voted to approve the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to provide guidelines for the acceptance of donations.” The policy states, “The BOE welcomes donations from individuals, organizations, and corporations. Prior to acceptance, donations will be reviewed under criteria established by the regulations.”

### NEW BUSINESS

#### ***Consider First Reading of Equity Policy (File: IMAA)***

The school board voted to approve the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to foster the success of each student in our schools. For that success to occur for each student in lifelong learning and the world of work, the BOE prioritizes educational equity by recognizing and removing institutional barriers and ensuring that social identifiers are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities and supports that benefit each student. Achieving equity means implicit biases and students’ identities will neither predict nor predetermine their success in school. Educational equity should be a lens through which all policies, procedures, and practices are viewed and decided.”

#### ***Monthly Finance Report***

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, updated the school board on the following financial highlights from March:

- Legal fees are on track with last year. Just over 68% of the budget has been spent compared to 67.4% last year. This statement did not include invoices for March.
- The use of substitute teachers is down about \$50,000 compared to last year; however, this could be a timing issue.
- 97.79% of the budget has been spent on equipment purchases.
- The tuition for non-public placements is trending well compared to last year as ACPS has fewer students requiring these outside services.
- Transportation costs are up just over \$50,000 compared to last year.
- Utility costs are down from last year, and 70% of the budget has been used this year compared to 73% last year.
- Retirement costs are up approximately \$428,000 compared to last year, in part due to the appropriation of grants still to be made.
- Healthcare costs continued to be monitored closely. The past two months have showed positive variances, and this line item is still trending well compared to the budget.

#### ***Vote to Meet in Executive Session on April 23, 2019, as Necessary***

The school board voted to meeting in Executive Session on Tuesday, April 23, 2019, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The meeting will be held at Washington Middle School at 6 p.m.

## BOARD MEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

### ***Ms. Eesha Bokil, SMOB***

Eesha updated the school board on the following items involving the Allegany County Association of Student Councils (ACASC):

- Ms. Bokil, as the Student Member of the Board, attended Leadership Allegany Education Day to serve as a panel member. She was able to provide the class with a student's perspective on the innovative academic programs in ACPS.
- ACASC members recently attended the MASC three-day conference in Ocean City, MD, where they had the opportunity to vote on next year's officers at the state level.
- ACASC held a general assembly to elect new Executive Board officers for next year at the local level.
- The ACASC Executive Board met to finalize the details of their Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs Campaign.

### ***Mrs. Deb Frank***

Mrs. Frank addressed the audience to thank them for their continued support and apologized for all of the turmoil surrounding the current school board. She noted that she will continue to do what she was elected to do, which is to work on making improvements to the school system and on conditions for teachers. She stated that she has been faced with the challenge of a tumultuous board majority, but is working hard to ensure that the Board of Education is a 5-person board, not at 3-person board. Because the advisory opinion of the Ethics Panel was dismissed, she now plans to send this information on to the state to get a declaratory judgment. Mrs. Frank noted that she is not politicizing the Ethics Panel, but rather is seeking clarification on certain board actions and will continue to use whatever legal recourse available to try to resolve these issues. She also stated that she refuses to work on things that could possibly be nullified later as it is a waste of hers and the board's time. Mrs. Frank has also been actively researching mental health wraparound services but can't put all of her focus on that work until issues among board members are resolved.

### ***Mrs. Tammy Fraley***

Mrs. Fraley had the opportunity to serve on the ACPS panel for Leadership Allegany Education Day, and as an alumni of the program can't stress enough what a great opportunity it provides to members of the community. She also had the chance to attend the NSBA National Conference in Philadelphia on behalf of MABE and plans to present information she gathered during breakout sessions. Mrs. Fraley served as a chaperone on a field trip to D.C. for Fort Hill's AP U.S. and World History classes. While there, the students were able to tour the Holocaust and African American History Museums. The group of students then participated in a competition the next day at FSU about what they had learned. Finally, Mrs. Fraley recognized that the school board is facing numerous challenges, but their focus should be on the students and amazing programs offered in ACPS, not politics.

### ***Mr. Wayne Foote***

Mr. Foote thanked the audience for attending the meeting. He was also pleased to have been in attendance for the Teacher of the Year banquet. He stated that he is serving on the school board because he cares for kids, and especially teachers, having been a teacher himself for 42 years. He is also happy to know that a staff forum is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup> at Allegany High School at 4 p.m. to give staff the opportunity to voice their concerns with the board in an effort to improve employee morale.

## CONSTITUENTS' COMMENTS

### ***Judy McBride, Substitute Teacher***

Mrs. McBride addressed the school board with concerns over open classroom schools indicating that she feels it is nearly impossible to teach so that students can hear or maintain an orderly classroom in schools with open space classrooms. She also feels that it is unfair to students who may have attention deficit problems. Mrs. McBride also noted that it is a safety concern for schools with open space classrooms in the event of an active shooter as students and staff doesn't specifically have anyplace safe to hide. Finally, Mrs. McBride also voiced her concern over the decreased daily pay rate for substitutes in ACPS from \$102/per day to \$92/per day. She is hopeful that the school board will look into addressing these concerns.

### ***William Croft, Parent***

Mr. Croft addressed the school board as a parent unhappy with how a personal situation was handled involving his child. The child made a concerning comment in school, and as is required by mandatory reporters, the teacher notified Child Protective Services who began an investigation. Mr. Croft felt that this was very disruptive to his life and wished that the teacher had chosen a different way to address this situation.

### ***Dekota Wilson, Parent***

Ms. Wilson didn't address specific concerns with the school board, only that she was having difficulties resolving a situation involving her child and felt that she had exhausted all her other options. She was hopeful that the school board would be able to assist her.

### ***Joy Kroeger-Mappas, Constituent***

Mrs. Kroeger-Mappas addressed the school board, specifically Mr. Farrell and Mr. Foote regarding their failure to comply with the Ethics Panel advisory opinion to recuse themselves from voting on legal counsel. She also addressed Dr. Bohn about, what she felt were inappropriate comments, regarding the need to listen to the opinions of the Ethics Panel. Dr. Bohn responded that his comments were off the cuff because of his surprise in learning of this opinion for the first time at that meeting and noted that he could have expressed himself better. He does, however, feel that the Ethics Panel is being politicized and not being used for the purpose it was intended. Mr. Foote did not comment, and Mr. Farrell indicated that he didn't feel that he had a conflict on interest in this particular situation, as his attorney for his personal lawsuit against the school board was different from the school board's new legal counsel. Mrs. Kroeger-Mappas did not agree and still felt that they weren't conducting themselves in an ethical and moral manner.