

BOARDROOM CHATTER

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Opening of Schools

Mr. Jeff Blank, Interim Superintendent of Schools, noted that the 2019-2020 school year was off to a positive start. To get the latest news about updates about ACPS, visit the school system's website or social media pages.

INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATES

AG Science Update

Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, ACPS Chief Academic Officer, provided the school board with an update on an agriculture science elective. ACPS plans to add a high school elective Agriculture Science course to the Program of Study that will be implemented during the 2020-2021 school year.

ACPS is currently in the planning stages of the elective course and have been working with MSDE on this implementation. The first course under consideration would be an introduction to the major areas of agriculture that may include, but not be limited to, agriculture food, horticulture, natural resources, animal, environmental, and wildlife management. Forestry is also under consideration.

ACPS staff will begin to develop the curriculum framework as soon as the CTE Supervisor position is filled. There are several districts in Maryland that offer AG electives, and staff will consult with several of them throughout this implementation process. The central vision of the program will be to have field experiences, hands-on activities with the school and beyond the school walls that will provide an authentic and engaging experience for students. ACPS will also seek input on potential guest speakers, field trips, and other beneficial activities.

Additionally, it was recommended to increase the exposure of K-8 students to agriculture science, so, for the 2019-2020 school year, administration is asking that each principal work with teachers to implement a classroom lesson(s) and/or activities that could take place during the month of October to highlight National Farmers Day and during the month of March to highlight National Agriculture Day. Principals have been provided with an online curriculum matrix of grade level lessons and activities in the area of agriculture. Agriculture will also be represented at the school system's annual Focus on the Future event in November.

Goals and information about the elective will be communicated with AG stakeholders, community member, parents, and students as recruitment efforts take place later this year.

Assessment and Accountability Update

Mrs. Trina Simpson, ACPS Assistant Supervisor of Assessment and

Board of Education

Mr. Robert Farrell, President
Dr. David Bohn, Vice President
Mrs. Tammy Fraley
Mr. Wayne Foote
Mrs. Debra Frank
Mr. Jeffrey Blank, Interim Superintendent
Mr. Omaer Naeem, SMOB

CONSENT AGENDA

The school board voted unanimously to approve the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of minutes for Open Session and Public Meetings on August 13, 2019.
2. Receive routine personnel actions for period of August 1-31, 2019.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for period of August 1-31, 2019.
4. Receive information technology report for the period of August 1-31, 2019.
5. Receive monthly financial report.
6. Approve bid from Bedford Valley Petroleum for fuel oil for the 2019-2020 school year. Mrs. Fraley has asked that this report be edited for future meetings to include a column that shows last year's budget. Currently, the report only compares last year's actual figures to this year's budget. She would like the comparison to show budget to budget.
7. Approve bid from Pine Mountain Coal Co. for supplying coal to BR, WA, and FO for 2019-2020 school year.
8. Approve bid from Burgmeier's Hauling, Inc. for refuse removal and cardboard recycling at 27 locations for period September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020.

Accountability, provided the school board with an update on the results of the 2019 Maryland State Assessments in ELA and math as well as the 2019-2020 ACPS testing calendar.

The 2019 assessment graduation requirements are as follows:

- ELA 10 – must pass ELA 10 with a 725, a combined ELA/Algebra of 1450, or complete Bridge
- Algebra I – must pass Algebra I with a 725, combined Algebra I/ELA of 1450, or complete Bridge
- Government – must pass HSA government with a 394, a combined Government/Biology score of 794, or complete Bridge
- MISA (Maryland Integrated Science Assessment) – must have taken the MISA exam or the HSA biology exam

The 2019-2020 ACPS testing calendar is as follows:

- KRA (Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) – Opening day is October 10th
- PSAT – October 16th for any junior at no cost and for other students upon request for a fee of \$10
- HS ELA and Algebra I – December 16th through February 7th for non-passing first time scorers and non-test takers for Algebra I and ELA 10. The Accuplacer will be given to seniors not CCR in ELA and math.
- HS Government and MISA – January 6th through January 31st in government for non-passing first time scorers and non-test takers, and MISA for seniors that have not tested.
- Maryland School Survey – February 24th through April 24th for all students in grades 5-11
- MISA Science – March 9th through March 27th for all grade 5 and grade 8 students
- Multi-State ALT Assessment – March 16th through May 1st for grades 3-8 and 11 in ELA and math for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the MCAP assessment even with accommodations.
- ELA and Math – April 6th through May 29th for all grades 3-8
- HS MISA – May 4th through June 4th for students that have completed the required 3-year coursework
- HS Government – May 4th through June 4th for students currently in government and those not assessed twice
- Social Studies – May 4th through June 4th for all grade 8

Mrs. Simpson also shared with the school board several highlights of the 2018-2019 Maryland assessment results. ACPS highlights include the following:

- The ACPS proficiency rate is above the state average at all grade levels for ELA, math, and science assessments.
- Grade 5 ELA performed 10.7% above the state average.
- Grade 4 math performed 9.8% above the state average.
- Grade 3 showed the most significant growth in both ELA and math. ELA proficient scores rose 4% from the previous year, while math rose 5.9%.
- Ten of fourteen elementary schools showed growth in grade 3 math.
- Parkside and Flintstone Elementary Schools showed growth in ELA for all grade levels tested as well as two of the three grade levels in math.
- Beall Elementary and Mt. Savage Middle showed growth in all grade levels tested in math.
- Frost Elementary School's proficiency rate is above 70% in five of six tested areas.
- Cash Valley Elementary grade 5's proficiency rate is above 70% in both ELA and math.
- ACPS is above the state average at all grade levels for ELA and six of seven tested areas of math.
- Grade 6 ELA proficiency increased 12.2%, which is 7% above the state average, and grade 8 ELA increased 9.5%.
- Grade 7 math performed 10.6% above the state average, while Algebra I results are 10.1% above the state average.
- Braddock and Washington Middle Schools scored above 90% in Algebra I.
- Braddock and Mt. Savage Middle Schools showed growth in ELA for all tested grade levels.
- All four middle schools showed growth in the MISA.
- ACPS is above the state average in ELA and Algebra I at the high school level.
- The ELA proficiency rate increased to 53.2%, which is 7.9% higher than the previous year.
- The Government proficiency rate increased by 4%.
- Mountain Ridge showed growth in all three tested areas – ELA, Algebra, and Government.

Scores on the assessments are used for school system and school-level accountability purposes as part of Maryland's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. The 2018-2019 school year was the final year that state assessments utilized

INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATES (CONT.)

materials developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, students will be assessed under the new Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP), which will focus on the same academic content standards in ELA and math as in previous years, but with new items developed by Maryland educators. These assessments are designed to provide students, parents, and teachers with an understanding of student progress toward graduation and workforce readiness.

NEW BUSINESS

Policy Committee Update on Policy Review Process

Mrs. Fraley wanted to bring to the school board's attention the need to have a policy review process in place to ensure that all policies are current, are adhering to state laws, and are in align with board member philosophies. When at a recent national school board conference, Mrs. Fraley came upon a county that has a policy review process in place, and she plans to bring this to the attention of the policy committee at the next meeting.

Consideration of Board Meeting Schedule

The school board voted on a tentative meeting schedule for the 2019-2020 school year. Meeting dates can be found on the school system's website calendar, www.acpsmd.org.

Approve Contract for Interim Superintendent

The school board voted to approve the contract for the interim superintendent, Mr. Jeff Blank, which will be effective for one year.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session on September 24, 2019, if Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, at 4:30 p.m. pending any appeals or unfinished business. The public Open Session will follow the Executive Session at 6 p.m. at the Board of Education's Central Office, 108 Washington Street.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Jackie Sams

Mrs. Sams addressed the school board concerning school safety and security, specifically recent comments made on WCBC radio by school board president, Bob Farrell. Mrs. Sams was unhappy when she learned of Mr. Farrell's comments to possibly issue an RFP to solicit bids from an outside security company for school

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consider Second Reading of Fundraising Policy (File: JJE)

The school board voted to approve the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is "to provide a framework for school-related fundraising activities, as well as the proper distribution of funds, goods, or services on behalf of ACPS that safeguards instructional time, maximizes the safety of students, supports a common school experience for all students, and includes appropriate accountability provisions."

The policy states, "The Board of Education of Allegany County recognizes a desire and need for fundraising to support district programs or student activities. Fundraising and solicitation shall be at the discretion and approval of the principal. Any funds, materials, equipment, or proceeds from such approved solicitations by ACPS staff become the property of the school and not of any individual staff member."

Vote to Retract Need for Declaratory Ruling

School board vice president, Dr. David Bohn, made a motion to retract the need for a declaratory ruling from the state regarding policy File: ECAE School Safety and Security. In June, the school board voted to seek a declaratory decision from the State BOE regarding sections 4-103 and 6-201 and the definitions of certified vs. non-certified and professional vs. non-professional.

The school board voted 3-1 to retract the need for this ruling. Mrs. Fraley voted in opposition and requested that the policy in question, which was tabled in favor of seeing the declaratory decision, needs to be put back on the agenda for a second reading. The policy, she noted, does not even address the new positions of controversy nor does it adhere to the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018.

security in an effort to take the liability off of the school board. She feels that that is abdicating responsibility for students and their safety. Mr. Farrell noted that he would like to hire retired police officers, but that the school board needed to explore all options. Mrs. Sams noted that regardless of what direction the school board ultimately decides to go with school security, it needs to be thoroughly discussed in public. There has been no public discussion regarding an RFP.

Mr. T.R. Robinette, President Allegany County Farm Bureau

Mr. Robinette addressed the school board to thank them for their work to bring an AG science elective to ACPS next year and noted that he will help in any way he can to make this successful.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Debra Frank

Mrs. Frank was unable to attend this meeting, but asked that Mrs. Fraley read the following comments on her behalf: *“As noted at the August board meeting, and in an email to President Farrell, I am sorry I was not able to be present tonight. I am attending a national event planning conference on behalf of ACM. A request was made to change the meeting date as has been done before and that request was ignored. First, let me say that I wish for all the students, teachers, administrators, and staff an outstanding year. I had the pleasure of attending Parkside’s first day celebration and it was touching to see how excited the students were. Those are the moments that I most appreciate being a board member. Secondly, I must address continuing concerns I have following misrepresentations made to the media yesterday by our board president. Tonight’s meeting agenda was published last week and did not include school safety as a topic. He was on air yesterday saying decisions would be made tonight regarding that issue, giving the public (and two board members) no advance notice. I had requested at the August meeting that we have a School Safety Town Hall meeting immediately so that the public could hear options as presented by Mr. Marlowe, our chiefs of police, the sheriff, and members of the Maryland Center for School Safety. These people, after all, are currently charged with protecting our schools. Once again, as was the case in April, this has been dismissed under the guise that somebody else knows better. That is frightening and should not be tolerated by anyone who genuinely wants to do what’s best. Other mistruths were presented including statements about Dr. Cox that were factually inaccurate. Our former superintendent published copious Weeks in Review that highlighted which schools he visited and how often. To say that Mr. Blank has visited more schools in a month than Dr. Cox had in ten years is nothing more than a continued smear campaign. I ran on the promise of providing facts to counter misinformation and will continue to do just that. I look forward to seeing everyone on September 24th and hope that the public continues to hold us all accountable and demand that we present truthful, factual, transparent information to lead this school system forward.”*

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley thanked City Reach Church for their generous donation of nearly 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies. She also had the opportunity to attend the State Board of Education meeting on behalf of MABE and was happy to hear first hand information on assessment results. Mrs. Fraley enjoyed seeing how Allegany County compared to other counties as well as the state. She was part of the welcome line at West Side Elementary School on the first day and was excited to see students happy to be there and ready to learn. Mrs. Fraley also met the new Executive Director of the Maryland Association for Secondary School Principals, who is looking forward to learning more about some of ACPS’s innovative programs. She also recently attended an economic stability meeting and shared several of the things the school system is doing and can do to help with economic stability in the area. Finally, Mrs. Fraley noted that the school system recently lost a retired employee, Mr. Larry Humbertson, who will be greatly missed and expressed her thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Humbertson’s family.

Mr. Wayne Foote

Mr. Foote was out of town for the opening of schools; however he had the opportunity to speak to all high school principals to wish them luck on a successful school year.

Mr. Robert Farrell

Mr. Farrell clarified that when he spoke to WCBC radio about school security, he meant that the discussion was to happen in Executive Session, not the Open Session. He was also at the Career Center for the first day of school and was pleased to see the students’ enthusiasm about returning to school. Finally, Mr. Farrell also expressed his condolences on the loss of Mr. Larry Humbertson, who was a person friend of his.