

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

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## INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### *Report from Annual MABE Conference*

Mr. Jeff Blank updated the public on the recent MABE Conference held in Annapolis Maryland. He was able to attend the annual event along with board members, Tammy Fraley, Deb Frank, and Bob Farrell. The school board attorney and the student member of the board also had the opportunity to attend. While there, Mr. Blank participated in a break out session on equity and meetings designated for superintendents and attorneys where they discussed topics such as summer school tuition, alternative programs, student transfers, and HB 486. Mr. Blank noted that he especially enjoyed the banquet where upcoming officers were recognized, including President-Elect Tammy Fraley, and former State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Nancy Grasmick.

## INSTRUCTIONAL & FINANCIAL UPDATES

### *Next Generation Scholars Program Update*

The school board heard an update from Carrie Pannone, NGS Program Coordinator. The Next Generation Scholars Program pathway utilizes a 4E Framework. Students explore their career interests, engage in a deeper understanding of career pathways of interest, execute their continued development towards their career goals, and elevate their career plans by taking final steps to access college and career options.

This year in ACPS, there were a total of 151 students in the NGS program. Those numbers break down as follows: 60 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Washington; 51 freshman at Fort Hill; and 40 sophomores at Fort Hill. This is an increase of 44 students from last year. 95% of students try very hard to get good grades in all of their classes; 77% understand the wide variety of STEM career options available; and 95% are glad to be participating in the NGS program.

The NGS program requires 94% or better attendance rate; no more than one referral or suspension; and a GPA of 2.5 or better. 80 of the 151 NGS students met these program goals as Rising Stars, Shining Scholars, and Student Ambassadors. The program hosted five parent meetings reaching a total of 202 parents. 93% of parents believe a college education is important for their child; 76% of parents responded that they had not yet started saving for college; and 70% of parents believed that their child was more likely to attend college as a result of NGS.

As a part of the program, students enjoy one-on-one small group career interest discussions, visits to colleges (ACM, UMBC, Aberdeen Proving Grounds), career tours, summer programs, and a variety of college and career resources. Upcoming visits include Hood College, NACAC College Fair, additional career

## 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:

- Approval of minutes for Open Session and Public Meeting September 10, 2019, and September 24, 2019.
- Receive routine personnel actions for the period of September 1-30, 2019.
- Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of September 1-30, 2019.
- Receive information technology report for the period of September 1-30, 2019.
- Receive monthly financial report.
- Approve Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for School Facilities.
- Approve the nomination or reappointment of the following to the Local Advisory Council (LAC) for Career and Technology Education in Allegany County: Lisa McIndoe, Hunter Douglas; and James Gattens, Western Maryland Health System.

tours, U.S. Naval Academy, and UMD.

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

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, provide the school board with an update of the monthly financial information from September 2019:

- Legal fees are on track with the budget, and nearly 25% of the budgeted amount has been used to date.
- The cost of substitutes is down a bit from last year.
- The cost of equipment is significantly lower, but that is due to the timing of a bus purchase from last year.
- The tuition for nonpublic placements continues to decline.
- Transportation costs are on track with last year.
- Utilities are up a bit but are close to the budgeted amount.
- Retirement costs are in line with last year.
- Healthcare costs are nearly \$281,000 higher year to date, but this was expected and budgeted for.

## NEW BUSINESS

### ***Recommendation from Staff Regarding Safety and Security***

Mrs. Tracey Leonard, ACPS Assistant Supervisor of Health, P.E., Athletics, and Mental Health, updated the school board on mental health services in Allegany County. ACPS currently employs 27 full-time guidance counselors (1 counselor per elementary school and Westmar Middle, 2 in the other middle and high schools), 7 full-time school psychologists, 5 full-time pupil personnel workers, and 1 full-time licensed clinical social worker. School counselors help students with the following:

- Apply academic achievement strategies
- Manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- Plan for post-secondary options
- Individual student academic planning and goal setting
- School counseling classroom lessons based on student success standards
- Short-term counseling to students
- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with families/teachers/administrators/community for student success
- Data analysis to identify student issues, needs, and challenges

School psychologists focus on understanding behavioral symptoms and academic issues via testing, researching, and assessing. Pupil personnel workers are specialists trained to assess student needs, serve as student advocates, and act as a motivating force in removing barriers to student achievement. The Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) is a sub-sector within the field of social work. They work with students in order to help deal with issues involving mental and emotional health. There are a wide variety of specializations the LCSW can focus on, such as working with mental health issues, substance abuse, public health, school social work, medical social work, and children and family therapy. Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors (LCPC) are professionals who have been qualified to provide psychotherapy and other counseling services. LCPCs are trained to work with individuals, families, and groups to treat mental, behavioral, and emotional problems and disorders.

ACPS staff recommends that an additional 3 LCSWs and/or LCPCs be added to serve Allegany/Braddock, Fort Hill/Washington, and Mountain Ridge/Mt. Savage/Westmar. Additionally, as a continuation from last month's meeting, Mr. Matt Marlowe, ACPS Assistant Supervisor of Student Support Services and School Safety, recommended that the school board add 3-4 School Security Employees that would rotate between schools and focus on geographically isolated schools.

The school board voted unanimously to add 4 LCPS/LCSWs and 4 School Security Employees for a total budget

## NEW BUSINESS (CONT.)

amendment of \$564,000. The next step is for this to be approved by the County.

### ***Superintendent Search***

Mrs. Fraley wanted to discuss the process and best options for the search for a permanent superintendent as this is a four-year position that holds a great deal of power. She noted that it would be in the best interest of the school system to conduct a national search, which is a best practice in the educational community, to include input from focus groups, local business leaders, and the community as a whole and not just the five board members. Mr. Llewellyn noted that in his research, he found that the cost to utilize MABE as a consultant in this process would be roughly \$18,000 plus any other expenses to include travel, lodging, food, and advertising. He also spoke with a consultant from the private sector that indicated that the fees for their services could range from \$20,000 to \$60,000, depending on how much they do for the school board.

At that, Dr. David Bohn noted that in his opinion it doesn't make sense to spend the money on a national search when ACPS has a fully qualified person in Mr. Blank. He feels that he has done an exceptional job thus far by visiting schools and speaking with staff. He is also a graduate of ACPS and a resident of Allegany County. Dr. Bohn then read the following prepared motion, "I move to appoint Mr. Blank to a permanent four-year term as ACPS Superintendent with the contract agreement for these four years reflecting the current terms of his interim agreement with any salary increases to be negotiated on a yearly basis. I also include direction for Mr. Llewellyn and Mr. Farrell to draw up this contract as soon as possible." Mr. Foote seconded the motion.

Mrs. Fraley and Mrs. Frank strongly opposed this motion as they hadn't even posted the permanent position and there may be other local educators interested in applying for the full-time job. Also, as a board of five, this decision should be made with input from the entire group, and until this motion was brought forth, there had been no prior discussion whatsoever about offering Mr. Blank the permanent role of Superintendent. Fraley and Frank also noted that this was a slap in the face to the community who will not have any input into this very important decision. Student member of the Board, Mr. Omaer Naeem, spoke on this giving a student perspective. He noted that this is a very important decision that should be dealt with deliberation and discourse, also engaging the community and each other in dialogue. He finished by stating that that is, in fact, what is being promoted to the students of ACPS.

The motion carried by 3-2 vote.

### ***Vote to Meet in Executive Session November 5, 2019, as Necessary***

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session in November pending any appeals or unfinished business. Then the Open Session will follow Executive Session at 6 p.m. at the Central Office.

## SCHOOL BOARD & SMOB COMMENTS

### ***Mr. Omaer Naeem, Student Member of the Board***

Omaer updated the school board on the following:

- The recent ACASC picnic was a success with more than 100 students in attendance.
- Mr. Naeem had the opportunity to attend the MABE Conference. He attended a lecture by Dr. Salmon on new policies and also had the opportunity to network with board members from across the state. Omaer found the conference very informative.
- ACASC is promoting several community-focused projects during October, which is National Bully Prevention Month.
- Omaer was accepted to his first choice of universities, the University of Pittsburgh. He will study for a combined degree of a BS in public health and a Master's in epidemiology.

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

Mrs. Frank learned a lot of valuable information at the recent MABE Conference. One topic that was very prevalent was that of equity. Her takeaway from that presentation was how ACPS can start leaning towards "providing things for each

## CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

***Mr. T.R. Robinette and Mr. Bernard Miltenberger, Allegany County Farm Bureau***

Both of these gentlemen spoke separately, but on the same topic. They both expressed once again their gratitude to the school board for working collaboratively with them to bring an agricultural science elective to the school system. They also noted their support for Mr. Blank keeping the permanent position of Superintendent, as he is a local resident who is well suited for the demands of this job.

instead of providing things for all.” Mrs. Frank also enjoyed the opportunity to network with other board members from across the states to hear their best practices, especially on the topics of school safety and mental health. Finally, Mrs. Frank reiterated her extreme displeasure about the motion to make Mr. Blank the permanent superintendent, especially without any input from fellow board members and the community.

***Mrs. Tammy Fraley***

Mrs. Fraley was the treasurer for MABE and was voted to be the president-elect at the recent conference. MABE’s role is to advocate for and promote school systems, especially when it concerns legislative changes affecting education. She had the opportunity to attend several sessions during the conference, one in particular on the Kirwin Commission, where she learned valuable information that she hadn’t heard at the local level. Mrs. Fraley also met with the local delegation, and plans to continue to not only represent MABE but also ensure that Allegany County has a voice at the table.

***Dr. David Bohn***

Dr. Bohn informed the public to be on notice that the school board, at his suggestion, plans to change the way they run the student art holiday card contest. In the past, students submitted artwork and the school board voted on the card that was then used as the official card of the board that year. The winning card from elementary, middle and high also received complimentary cards for their families. This year, there are plans to take all of the submitted student artwork and place them on a website and make them available for sale. All proceeds from the card sales will go back into the art programs. The student card that generates the most sales will be the contest winner.

***Mr. Wayne Foote***

Mr. Foote thinks that ACPS is a great school system. He hopes to continue to move forward and work as a team to do what is best for students. He also wants students to be safe, and noted that the school board needs to do whatever is necessary to keep them safe. Mr. Foote is also in support of the new holiday card contest brought forth by Dr. Bohn.

***Mr. Bob Farrell***

Mr. Farrell also found the sessions at the MABE Conference very informative, and he enjoyed the opportunity to network with other board members from across the state.