

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Present Proclamation Recognizing November 18-22, 2019, as American Education Week and November 20, 2019, as Education Support Professionals Day

The school board presented a proclamation to Mrs. Kim Sloane, President of ACEA, recognizing American Education Week and Education Support Professionals Day. Public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality. By equipping young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future. Education employees, whether they are custodians or teachers, bus drivers or librarians, work tirelessly to serve children and communities with care and professionalism. Schools are community linchpins; bring together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in a common enterprise.

Review Process for School Delays and Closures

Mr. Mark Morral, ACPS Supervisor of Transportation, updated the school board on the process for school delays and closures. ACPS considers a number of factors when making these decisions, the first being the safety of students traveling to and from school, including outside access to school buildings. Adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice, extreme cold temperatures and sustained wind chill temperatures, and the vast differences in terrain from one region of the county to the next affect these decisions as well.

ACPS transportation department personnel survey road conditions as early as 3:30 a.m. on mornings of inclement weather, traveling on routes that are representative of some of the critical areas for safe school bus travel. Staff also consults with the National Weather Service out of Pittsburgh, PA, and Sterling, VA, AccuWeather Service information, State Highway Administration weather stations, and other automated weather stations for weather forecasts and updates. While the school system does not require absolute "bare road" conditions to be in session, ACPS personnel regularly consult with County Roads Departments, the State Highway Administration, local municipality road crews, and surrounding counties' transportation offices to gather the best information available to make a reasonable decision.

On days when road conditions are passable, but extreme cold temperatures present safety concerns, ACPS uses as a baseline for delaying or closing schools for cold temperatures only, air temperature at or below 0° and/or sustained wind chill temperatures of -15° or below. Decisions are made based on current conditions, predicted conditions, how the cold temperatures will affect the operation of school buses, and properly clothed children. However,

Board of Education

Mr. Robert Farrell, President
Dr. David Bohn, Vice President
Mrs. Tammy Fraley
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 on October 8, 2019.
- Receive routine personnel actions for the period of October 1-31, 2019.
- Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of October 1 – 31, 2019.
- Receive information technology report for the period of October 1 – 31, 2019.
- Receive monthly financial report for October 2019.
- Approve the nomination of Krista Barry, PharmaCare, to the Local Advisory Council (LAC) for Career and Technology Education in Allegany County.

it is rare that cold temperatures are the only factor being considered when making a decision to delay or close schools.

ACPS policy states that “an emergency closing in the interest of safety for all persons concerned will be announced only after weather forecasts or road conditions indicate this action to be advisable.” The policy continues regarding delays to state “when weather and road conditions appear too dangerous for school bus travel and information and forecasts predict better weather and safe driving conditions may occur, a decision may be made to open schools two or three hours later than usual.”

Delay and closure announcements will be posted on the school system’s website, www.acpsmd.org, no later than 5:30 a.m. Following the website update, information will be announced via Blackboard Connect (all local media outlets receive the announcement via BBC), Facebook and Twitter, 9 News Now, Fox 5, WHAG TV, ABC 7 and News Channel 8, and the Baltimore Sun online. Announcements to close schools during an initial two or three-hour delay will be made no later than 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., respectively. Additionally, morning pre-kindergarten classes are always cancelled when schools are operating on a two or three-hour delay, and no breakfast is served. Early dismissal announcements will be made no later than 11 a.m., which will in turn cancel all sessions of afternoon pre-kindergarten.

School closings due to inclement weather may not always automatically cancel after school and evening activities. The Superintendent will consult with the appropriate staff to determine if weather conditions have improved to allow for the activity or event to take place. This decision will most often be made by noon on the day of the scheduled activity or event.

Parents are also reminded that they must opt-in to receive notifications via Blackboard Connect. They may contact their child’s school to confirm that they have done so. It is also important to note that any time a mass calling system is utilized, the time it takes for all calls to be completed can range from one to one and a half hours. Opting for a text message or visiting the ACPS website, Facebook, or Twitter will always be the fastest forms of notifications.

2019 Enrollment Update

Mrs. Nil Grove, ACPS Chief IT Officer, provided the school board with an enrollment comparison as of November 1, 2019. This year, the total number of students including pre-kindergarten is 8,437, down from last year’s figure of 8,539. It is important to note that the Maryland State Department of Education does not pay for pre-k students. This year’s pre-k enrollment is 455, also down from last year’s figure of 469. The total K-12 enrollment for 2020 is 7,982, down from last year’s enrollment of 8,070. The paid full-time enrollment (FTE) for ACPS this year is 7,955.25. Part-time students count for one FTE if they are taking four or more classes; .25 FTE for one class; .5 FTE for two classes; and .75 for three classes. This year, ACPS has 24.75 part-time students. Out-of-County/State students (those paying tuition) are not paid by state funds. This year, ACPS has one non-resident from West Virginia and one student with no attendance.

Legislative Update

Mr. Blank informed the public that the annual Pre-Legislative Breakfast will be held on December 5, 2019, in Garrett County with members of the Western Maryland Delegation. Priorities for the upcoming legislative session will be discussed prior to this meeting; however, unfunded mandates are typically of high priority between the two counties.

INSTRUCTIONAL & FINANCIAL UPDATES

Curriculum Committee Update

Dr. Kim Kalbaugh, ACPS Chief Academic Officer, provided the school board with several instructional updates. Agricultural education will be available through high school elective courses for students desiring to learn about the science, business, and technology of agriculture, plants and animals, environmental and natural resource systems. Two AG science semester courses will be developed for implementation in the 2020-2021 school year and will be offered to students in grades 9-12. The fall course will be Introduction to Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the spring course will be Wildlife and Forest Management. Each year, two more AG courses will be developed until there are eight

INSTRUCTIONAL & FINANCIAL UPDATES (CONT.)

semester courses available. The other tentative semester courses include Animal Vet Science (small), Animal Vet Science (large), Environmental and Natural Resources Management, Plant Science and Greenhouse Operations, Agricultural Business and Finance, and Agriculture Experience (field experience or internship). Student leadership opportunities will be available through the FFA organization. The primary goal of FFA will be to make a positive difference in the lives of the student members by developing their potential in the areas of leadership, interpersonal skills, personal growth and citizenship, character and excellence, and college and career readiness. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in supervised agricultural experiences that involve practical and real-world agricultural activities completed by students outside of planned classroom and lab time. These SAEs will provide a method for students to receive practical career skills in a part of agriculture in which they are interested.

Dr. Kalbaugh also updated the school board on the semi-annual Reality Fair that is designed for high school students enrolled in Personal Financial Literacy that provides hands-on, real-life situations with the many financial challenges adults face. Participation in this event helps students to become more aware of living within a budget and deepens their understanding of financial literacy.

The 14th Annual Focus on the Future showcase took place for all 7th grade students on November 5 and 6, 2019. This event strives to help students become more aware of career opportunities in Allegany County, the academic, technical, and workplace skills necessary for employment.

Staff has also begun working on the 2020 High School Programs of Study. Newly approved to be included in this program is an Honors AP Environmental Science course and a Peer Connections/Mentoring elective course that is designed to reduce or eliminate barriers to school success. This course is currently being piloted at Allegany High School. Components of the course focus on attendance, behavior, and achievement.

The Chamber of Commerce's annual Leadership Allegany! Education Day is scheduled for November 13, 2019. The purpose the ACPS portion of this day is to highlight innovative programs and events and to share instructional programs, activities, and events that are occurring in ACPS to prepare students for success in a changing world.

Finally, Restorative Practices Training for ACPS educators through the University of Maryland School of Law-Center for Dispute Resolution occurred in October and will occur again in December to continue training employees in restorative practices and restorative discipline and leadership.

Monthly Financial Report

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

- Just over 42% of the budgeted amount has been spent on Legal fees, which continue to trend well related to last year.
- Substitutes, equipment, transportation, utilities, and retirement costs are all trending well.
- Non-public placement numbers continue to decline.
- Healthcare costs are higher than this time last year but are trending well relative to the budget.

NEW BUSINESS

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

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to establish procedures for determining grade point averages and class rankings for all students working toward a Maryland High School diploma.”

The policy states, “A system of grading, including weighted grades for advanced placement courses, early college/dual enrollment on-site and honors, will be applied to all school system courses and will be utilized for purposes of eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.”

Review of Class Rank Grade Point Average Policy Regulations (File: IKC-R)

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy. No vote was needed to review regulations.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session in December as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The Open Session will follow the Executive Session at 6 p.m. at the Central Office on Washington Street. Please note the date change.

SCHOOL BOARD & SMOB COMMENTS

Mr. Omaer Naeem, Student Member of the Board

Omaer noted that he has been participating in the Allegany County Census Bureau meetings as a representative of ACASC and the BOE. He has also been preparing for ACASC's December General Assembly, which is scheduled for December 3, 2019, at Allegany High School. Finally, he reported that he had a very successful first marking period and looks forward to the remainder of the school year.

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank first acknowledged that an increase in aggressive behavior is also something she's seeing at the college level and has volunteered her time to collaborate in any way she can to help remedy this issue. She also had the opportunity to attend the Fort Hill NHS induction and will be attending this month the Westernport DARE graduation, the REACT reception, and the Parkside wax museum. Mrs. Frank also noted that it was heartwarming to see the Fort Hill school counselor that delivered a decorated locker to Ben Starr, a student athlete who is currently battling cancer. She hopes that the school board can be a united front moving forward to keep the focus on students and education.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley would like to also collaborate with other counties in Maryland to see how they are working through discipline regulations as the board attempts to resolve the issues of increasing aggressive student behavior. She also has a busy month as the liaison for the Greenway Avenue Capital Improvement Funds committee, attending Kirwin Commission meetings as both a representative of MABE and the local school board, and attending local events including the REACT reception. She too hopes to be a united front moving forward for the benefit of the students of ACPS.

Dr. David Bohn

Dr. Bohn is hopeful that perhaps with the addition of licensed social workers and mental health counselors the issue of aggressive student behaviors may decrease. He also had the opportunity to attend the farm bureau's annual dinner and spoke highly of the Farm Queen. Dr. Bohn also congratulated Fort Hill on their Homecoming win, but also commended Allegany for their efforts in the game.

Mr. Bob Farrell

Mr. Farrell didn't realize to the extent that aggressive student behaviors have escalated and is hopeful that Mr. Blank with work with ACEA to find a resolution to this problem. He also noted that he enjoyed the annual Teacher of the Year Gala and that ACPS's Teacher of the Year, Sarah Llewellyn, represented Allegany County well. He too wants to be a united school board moving forward.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Kim Sloane, President of ACEA

Mrs. Sloane addressed the school board to thank them for agreeing to change the annual Toys for Happiness denim day to one other than Friday since all staff is now permitted to wear denim every Friday. This year's Toys for Happiness denim day will now be on Tuesday, December 3, 2019. Staff is encouraged to donate a toy or money in exchange for the opportunity to wear jeans.

Additionally, Mrs. Sloane noted that substitute teachers play a vital role in student success; however, for the past several years, there has been a lack of available subs, and that continues to disrupt student learning. Therefore, Instructional Assistants (IA) are expected to fill this need with no additional stipend or differential for this extra work. There is also a lack of subs for IAs when they fill the teacher role.

IAs and Education Support Professionals (ESP) work diligently to assist teachers. One IA in particular, Christine Rephann of the Career Center, was selected as the ACEA 2019 ESP of the Year. CCTE teacher, Mr. Jason Kirby, nominated her.

Mrs. Peggy Bass, Secretary of ACEA

Mrs. Bas, an 18-year ESP, addressed the school board regarding the increase in aggressive student behavior, noting that staff have been assaulted and spat on putting the safety of staff and students in jeopardy. She asked the interim superintendent and the school board to work in conjunction with ACEA to help create workable solutions so that ESPs can do their jobs in a safe and secure environment.

Mr. Evan West, UniServe Director for ACEA

Mr. West spoke first on the selection process for a permanent superintendent. He is hopeful that the school board will opt to involve both the community and ACEA in the process going forward.

Mr. West also echoed Mrs. Bass' concerns over aggressive student behaviors that lead to unsafe conditions for both staff and students. According to a recent building survey that was conducted by ACEA, of 24 buildings, 14 indicated having issues with student behavior that have led to unsafe conditions, and of those 14, 12 buildings indicated that they are occurring very frequently.