

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognize Student Artists Selected as Board's Holiday Card Contest Winners

The school board recognized three students for being selected as this year's holiday card contest winners. Carter Bush was the elementary school category winner; Leilani Morgret was the middle school category winner; and Trenton Ross was the high school category winner. Each student received a complimentary pack of cards and personalized drinkware.

New this year, the top finalists that granted express permission have their designs featured online for purchase at www.cafepress.com/acpsholidaycards. These top greeting card designs are available for purchase in packs of ten at a cost of \$14.99 plus shipping and tax. The greeting cards are being sold at cost with no proceeds benefiting the school system.

Recognize Mountain Ridge High School Boys' Soccer Team as 1A State Champions

The school board recognized the Mountain Ridge High School boys' varsity soccer team for winning the Class 1A State Championship. Mountain Ridge, under the direction of head coach, Mr. Tim Nightengale, defeated Francis Scott Key by the score of 3-0 to win their third 1A state title. Mountain Ridge was also awarded the Team Sportsmanship Award by MPSSAA. They finished the regular season with a record of 10-2.

ACPS Employee Wellness Program Update

Mrs. Mia Cross, ACPS Public Information Officer and Employee Wellness Coordinator, updated the school board on the ACPS Employee Wellness Program. ACPS partnered with its healthcare provider, Cigna, to develop a wellness program designed to support and encourage employees to adopt healthy habits in an effort to enhance their quality of life and reduce their risk of disease. The program's vision is "to empower ACPS employees to take responsibility for their own health and health care decisions."

The program was implemented in 2013, and receives annual funding from Cigna to operate. School-based staff volunteers serve as Wellness Champions, who are points of contact for the program as well as promoters of the program's district wide initiatives within school buildings. These Wellness Champions also coordinate wellness initiatives unique to their buildings.

ACPS hosted its first annual employee health fair in 2015 at Fort Hill High School. Subsequent fairs have been held at Cash Valley, Allegany, and most recently at Mountain Ridge. Local area vendors participate, flu shots and other vaccines are offered, and raffle drawings and giveaways are always present. The 2019 fair was the most successful to date with nearly 30 vendors

Board of Education

Mr. Robert Farrell, President
Dr. David Bohn, Vice President
Mrs. Tammy Fraley
Mrs. Debra Frank
Dr. Edward Root
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 November 5, 2019.
- Approve routine personnel actions for period of November 1-30, 2019.
- Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of November 1-30, 2019.
- Receive information technology report for the period of November 1-30, 2019.
- Receive monthly financial report for November 2019.
- Consider accepting bids submitted for 66-passenger buses from K-Neal International and a 54-passenger bus with a lift gate from American Bus Sales.

and 307 employees in attendance.

ACPS also hosts an annual biometric screening and health assessment campaign, the first of which was held at Eckhart School in 2017. This screening event, which is totally voluntary, is the kick-off to a month-long health assessment campaign. Employees have the opportunity to attend to learn their numbers (total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, height, weight, and waist circumference). This event is now a two-day screening to allow for more employees to attend. As an incentive, raffles and giveaways are also offered. The 2019 screening event was the most successful to date with more than 100 employees participating. The 2020 Biometric Screening is tentatively scheduled for March 25th and 26th.

Other district wide employee wellness program activities include walking challenges. Each year, at least two district walking challenges are offered. Employees participate as part of their building teams for a chance to win gifts and prizes. In-house challenges were offered in the past, but new this year, ACPS will host multiple district challenges to include, but not be limited to, walking challenges.

Cigna allows wellness funds to be used in the form of mini-grants by building Wellness Champions, who can use them to host building wellness activities such as fitness classes, paint nights, chair massages, or healthy luncheons. These grants allow Wellness Champions to structure events unique to their buildings.

Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Update

Mr. Blank announced that the next meeting of this group is scheduled for December 16, 2019, at Allegany College of Maryland at noon. It is open to the public.

Disruptive Student Behavior Update

Mr. Blank informed the public that staff has been working collaboratively with members of ACEA to address concerns of disruptive student behavior and will continue to do so until the issues have been resolved.

Cash Valley Elementary School Update

Mr. Blank congratulated Cash Valley Elementary School for being one of only six Maryland schools selected as a 2019-2020 Blue Ribbon School for being exemplary high performing schools that places them in at least the top 15% of all schools in Maryland based on state assessment scores in math and ELA. Governor Larry Hogan and Dr. Karen Salmon, Maryland Superintendent of Schools, recognized these schools at a special ceremony on December 10th. The Allegany County school board will honor Cash Valley at a future school board meeting.

INSTRUCTIONAL & FINANCIAL UPDATES

Maryland Report Card Update

Mrs. Trina Simpson, ACPS Assistant Supervisor of Accountability and Assessment, updated the school board on the 2019 Maryland School Report Card. This report card was introduced in 2018, and this year there are three additional pieces of data that are now part of each school report card: science performance for elementary and middle schools; results from student and staff surveys; and an improvement indicator.

The Maryland School Report Card measures, at the elementary and middle school level, academic achievement in ELA and math, student growth in ELA and math, credit for completion of a well-rounded

curriculum, progress in achieving English language proficiency, and chronic absenteeism. At the high school level, it measures academic achievement in ELA and math, high school graduation rate, progress in achieving English language proficiency, on track in 9th grade, credit for completion of a well-rounded curriculum, and chronic absenteeism.

Stars are given to each school as a convenient way of expressing a school's final score on the Maryland accountability system, along with a school's percent of total earned points percent and percentile rank. Awarded stars are determined from the total earned points percent across all academic and school quality indicators. Stars are

awarded using a school's total earned points percent:

- 5 stars when a school has at least 75% of total earned points percent
- 4 stars when a school has at least 60% but less than 75% of total earned points percent
- 3 stars when a school has at least 45% but less than 60% of total earned points percent
- 2 stars when a school has at least 30% but less than 45% of total earned points percent
- 1 star when a school has less than 30% of total earned points percent

Nine ACPS elementary schools ranked in the top 25% of the state with four of those schools being in the top 10% of the state. At the elementary level, seven schools earned 5 stars; six schools earned 4 stars; and one school earned 3 stars. At the middle school level, two schools earned 4 stars and two earned 3 stars. At the high school level, three schools earned 4 stars, and one school earned 3 stars.

The Maryland School Survey touches on the following domains: safety, community, environment, and relationships. The survey results indicate that students felt most positive about:

- Adults like, care about, listen to, and respect students
- Opportunities to participate in class discussions, activities, school-sponsored events, extracurricular activities, and school rule making
- Receive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic supports
- Behavior is addressed appropriately, and what students are learning is important to them and connected to life outside the classroom.

All schools have received specific breakdowns of topics and will work on ways to improve all indicators on the survey.

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, provided the school board with an update of the monthly financial information from November 2019 on the areas of the budget that are subject to volatility:

- 50% of the budgeted amount has been spent on legal fees to date.
- The cost of substitutes is slightly higher this year compared to this time last year.
- Equipment costs are trending well so far this year.
- The tuition cost for non-public placements continue to trend downward.
- Transportation and utility costs are essentially flat compared to this time last year.
- Retirement costs show a large negative variance compared to last year; however, this is simply a timing issue based on when the invoice was paid. This will realign next month.
- Healthcare costs continue to trend well.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Accepting FY 2019 Audit Report from Huber Michaels & Company

The school board unanimously voted to accept the FY 2019 audit report from Huber Michaels and Company, as presented by Mr. Ed Huber.

Consider Approval of FY 2021 Budget Calendar

The school board approved the following FY 2021 budget calendar:

- 12/17/19 – chiefs, directors, supervisors, principals receive budget materials, information and directions
- 1/7/20 – board to adopt budget priorities
- 1/8/20 – Maryland General Assembly session begins
- 1/10/20 – budget requests received from chiefs, directors, supervisors
- 1/24/20 – preliminary draft state aid is available from State of Maryland and MSDE
- 2/4/20 – draft state aid is presented
- 2/4/20 – superintendent’s preliminary budget concepts are presented
- February – superintendent’s budget is presented to board and public
- 3/3/20 – board votes on request to county government
- Mid March – board presents funding request to county government
- 3/31/20 – any non-recurring cost considerations are due to MSDE from county must be agreed upon by board and county commissioners
- 4/6/20 – General Assembly session ends 90-day period
- Mid April – county government releases preliminary budget
- May – county government releases five-year CIP budget
- June – county government adopts budget; superintendent recommends final budget adjustments; board adopts final budget; adjustments on board budget due to county government; commissioners approve final adjustments to board budget

Consider First Reading of Legal Services Policy (File: BDG)

The school board voted unanimously to table the above policy and send it back to the policy committee for further revisions.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session on January 7, 2020, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, January 7, 2019, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The public Open Session will follow the Executive Session at 6 p.m. at the central office on Washington Street.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

The school board approved the second reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to establish procedures for determining grade point average 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. This grading system will be designated on all student transcripts. The student transcript will reflect a cumulative grade point average (GPA).”

SCHOOL BOARD & SMOB COMMENTS

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank noted that she attended a DARE celebration as well as a REACT robotics annual celebration. She was thrilled to mention that in just two years, ACPS has gone from three robotics teams to 21 teams, mostly on the backs of volunteers. Mrs. Frank will also post information on her BOE Facebook page about an upcoming robotics event at FSU in January that is in need of volunteers. Finally, Mrs. Frank welcomed Dr. Root to the school board and said that she was honored to be working with someone with his wealth of knowledge.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley participated in the pre-legislative breakfast with Garrett County and noted that they have some of the same issues that Allegany County does. She is hopeful that the two counties and school boards can work together during the General Assembly session to reach some common goals. Mrs. Fraley also noted that she attended a DARE celebration at South Penn recently in which one student gave a wonderful speech that many in the audience were amazed with. Finally, Mrs. Fraley mentioned that the school board was in receipt of a letter from the Chamber of Commerce regarding their desire for a superintendent search.

Dr. David Bohn

Dr. Bohn updated the public that the original letters at Mt. Savage School are currently being repaired and will be installed on the side of the school building in the near future.

Dr. Edward Root

Dr. Root was appointed to fill a vacancy on the school board. He noted that this is not the process by which he would have liked to become a member of the school board, but it is nonetheless the way it is. His service on the school board will be guided by several fundamental principles essential to the successful functioning of the board. He will not seek to form or be part of a coalition, and his vote will always be independent and in what he believes to be the best interest of the students and staff of ACPS. Dr. Root encouraged his fellow board members to engage in free and open debate before making any decisions or casting any votes. He hopes to see all future meetings conducted in a professional manner in an effort to instill public confidence in their decisions. There needs to be a high level of respect for the appropriate level of confidentiality, and the integrity of board members must be unquestioned. Lastly, he said that each member needs to support board decisions once made. The time for disagreement is prior to an enabling vote, as once an issue is settled by vote, it becomes a board decision that all members must support, regardless of how an individual voted. Dr. Root closed by reminding the public that

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mr. Evan West, ACEA UniServe Director

Mr. West addressed the school board and noted that ACEA representatives recently met with Mr. Blank and senior staff members to discuss the issue of disruptive student behavior brought forth at the last school board meeting. He concurred that it was a productive meeting as all parties are working collaboratively to address these issues; however, there is still much work to be done. There are a number of legislative items that will deal with discipline regulations that Mr. West hopes that ACEA and the school board can work together to address at the General Assembly level. He encouraged the school board to stay tuned to see where the two groups can work cooperatively to amend or adjust policy.

Mrs. Kim Sloane, ACEA President

Mrs. Sloane gave the school board an update on the success of the 15th Annual Denim Day for Toys for Happiness. Staff generously donated a total of 282 toys and \$2,294.25 to help make the holidays a little more special for area children in need. Mrs. Sloane also thanked the school board for working collaboratively with ACEA to find solutions to help make learning environments more positive places for both staff and students. She, herself, recently spent three days in restorative practices training as a way to help others achieve this goal.

the primary purpose of a school system is to educate and care for the students entrusted to them.

Mr. Bob Farrell

Mr. Farrell congratulated Cash Valley Elementary School on their Blue Ribbon School award and noted that he was pleased to be a part of the ceremony at the State House along with the Governor and State Superintendent of Schools.