

BOARDROOM CHATTER

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Board of Education

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

New officers are elected at the first school board meeting in January each year. Tammy Fraley will serve as the new President, and Deb Frank will serve as the Vice President, succeeding Mr. Farrell and Dr. Bohn, respectively.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognize Cash Valley Elementary School as 2019-2020 Maryland Blue Ribbon School

The school board recognized Cash Valley Elementary School for being one of six Maryland schools selected as 2019-2020 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools for their exemplary high performance that places them in top 15% of all schools in the state based on assessment scores in math and English language arts.

Cash Valley will receive a Maryland Blue Ribbon flag, a monetary prize, \$1,000 in office supplies, interactive technology equipment, and a school party. A dinner will be held to honor the winning schools in March, where the Maryland House of Delegates and the Senate will also recognize them. Cash Valley now has the opportunity to apply to be a National Blue Ribbon School.

Recognize Beall Elementary School as the only ESEA Distinguished School in Maryland

The school board recognized Beall Elementary School for being selected as the only school in Maryland to be honored as a National Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished School by the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators for providing superior, federally funded school programs.

Schools selected for this prestigious award demonstrate a wide array of strengths, including team approaches to teaching and learning, focused professional development opportunities for staff, individualized programs for student success, and strong partnerships between the school, parents, and the community. National ESEA Distinguished Schools boast documented student achievement gains that have resulted from collaborative and targeted efforts and innovations.

A ceremony to recognize winning schools will take place in February in Atlanta, GA.

Recognize Offensive and Defensive Players of 2019 Homecoming Game Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Update

The school board recognized Carson Snyder of Fort Hill High School for being selected as the Offensive Player of the annual Homecoming game, and Dillon Hogamier of Allegany High School as the Defensive Player of the annual Homecoming Game. Members of the local media who cover the game vote on the winners of these awards.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Approval of minutes for Open Session on December 10, 2019.
- Approve routine personnel actions for period of December 1-31, 2019.
- Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of December 1-31, 2019.
- Receive information technology report for the period of December 1-31, 2019.
- Receive monthly financial report for December 2019.
- Approve Certificated Early Retirement notifications.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Larry McKenzie, ACPS Chief Finance Officer, provided the school board with an update of the monthly financial information from December 2019 on the areas of the budget that are subject to volatility. This report represents the first half of the year, and figures are trending well overall compared to the budget.

- Legal fees are up slightly compared to last year; however, continues to show the same monthly variance. Many of the fees are one-time and are a result of Dr. Cox's departure.
- Substitutes are trending well, but are a bit over budget compared to last year. 31% of the budget has been used.
- The entirety of the equipment budget will be utilized.
- Tuition for non-public placements is trending well, but is a category that can fluctuate significantly with the addition of even a few students requiring these services.
- Transportation costs are on track with the budget.
- Utility costs are up slightly compared to last year but continue to trend well compared to the budget.
- Retirement costs are in line with last year. 62% of the budget has been utilized, and it is anticipated that if there is a shortfall in this category it will be offset by savings in another.
- Healthcare costs are down compared to last year and are trending well.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on Development of the FY2021 Operating Budget Goals and Priorities

In order to provide guidance and direction to the Superintendent in the preparation of the FY 2021 Proposed Superintendent's Operating Budget, the school board compiled the following budget priorities in no certain order or significance for consideration, discussion, and approval by vote during the meeting:

1. Preserve and enhance student programs and associated needs as possible based on student interest and enrollment, with an added focus on current and future Center for Career and Technical Education (CCTE) programs.
2. Maintain and enhance school safety as possible considering local law enforcement recommendations and the Maryland Center for School Safety Policies and Regulations.
3. Maintain and enhance licensed mental health service providers as possible.
4. Make every effort to provide employees with negotiated benefits, including salary and health insurance benefits, such that their take home pay would not be less due to increased employee shared costs of health insurance, and give raises if possible.

Review of Methodology for Supplement Not Supplant Policy Regulations (File: DFAB)

The school board reviewed the regulations for the above policy, which states, "The BOE of Allegany County uses a combined approach methodology. Staffing is based on student enrollment; salary amounts are not considered. Some categories of funding are made on a per pupil basis. Some funding is based upon an equal amount distributed to each school."

"The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the allocation of state and local funds. The BOE of Allegany County's budget is compiled and approved by local county government. An annual audit of the organization is required by COMAR and performed by an approved audit firm. MSDE auditors come to the district every two years and perform an audit of the financial and statistical reports that relate to State Aid to Education Programs as well as other monitoring visits periodically. Approximately every six years, the Department of Legislative Services of the Maryland General Assembly's Office of Legislative Audits conducts an audit of the financial management practices of school districts within the state."

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

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is "to identify how the school

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system obtains legal services.” The policy states “The BOE of Allegany County is authorized and empowered to retain the services of an attorney to represent it in legal matters affecting the Board. Funds for the board attorney’s retainer fee shall be placed in the annual budget. The board attorney should be knowledgeable concerning public school laws in the State of Maryland as well as the various civil laws affecting school board operations.”

Consider First Reading of Methodology for Supplement Not Supplant Policy (File: DFAB)

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to describe how the school system allocates state and local funds.” The policy states, “The BOE of Allegany County works to ensure that Title I schools receive the same amount of state and local funding they would receive regardless of their Title I status. Title I funds are used to supplement, not supplant, state and local funds. Federal law prohibits recipients of federal funds from replacing state, local, or agency funds with federal funds.”

Vote to Consider National Search for Superintendent of Schools

School board vice president, Debra Frank, made a motion to add this item to the meeting agenda. Based on public comments, media coverage, and at the request of the Chamber of Commerce and ACEA, Mrs. Frank thinks it is imperative to conduct a national search for a permanent superintendent and that aligns with best practices across the state. Board members discussed this motion before finally voting unanimously to contact MABE to schedule a briefing with the school board, prior to or at the next meeting, to review the process, phases, and timeframe of conducting a search for a permanent superintendent.

Vote to Meet in Executive Session on February 4, 2020, as Necessary

The school board voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, 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.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER REPORTS & COMMENTS

Omaer Naeem, Student Member of the Board

Omaer updated the school board on the following items:

- The Allegany County Association of Student Councils has been conducting Executive Board Meetings over the past two months, and the next General Assembly is scheduled for February 6, 2020, and will focus on preparing students for college.
- The Maryland Association of Student Councils will host its legislative session on February 8, 2020, and Omaer will attend on behalf of ACPS.
- The Allegany High School mock trial team recently competed in a tournament with eighteen other teams, and was successful in placing fifth. The tournament was highly competitive as it was based on collegiate level mock trial.
- Omaer announced that he was accepted to the University of Chicago, his top choice, and he credits this acceptance to the quality of education he has received in ACPS.

Mr. Robert Farrell

Mr. Farrell took the opportunity to commend the ACPS Transportation Department for making the decision last week to keep schools open and not dismiss students early during the brief afternoon snowstorm. He believes they

made the right call.

Mrs. Deb Frank

Mrs. Frank noted that both she and Mrs. Fraley had the opportunity to volunteer at the recent First Lego League robotics tournament. A total of 20 teams competed, and ACPS was successful in advancing three teams to the finals. Mrs. Frank thinks that it is remarkable to see what these students can accomplish, and acknowledged the hard work and cooperation of students, staff, parents and the community in making these opportunities possible. She noted that both Allegany and Fort Hill High Schools also had teams recently compete in robotics competitions as well.

Mrs. Tammy Fraley

Mrs. Fraley noted that she along with her fellow board members will attend the annual PACE conference in Annapolis next week. She will also attend the monthly MABE board meeting the day before. Mrs. Fraley stressed the importance of attending PACE as it is a perfect opportunity to speak with legislators to communicate the

school system's priorities. She also commended the First Lego League organization and stated that it is a wonderful opportunity for students, but takes funding to operate. Every elementary school in the county has at least one team. Finally, Mrs. Fraley once again encouraged the public to reach out to her personally if they have any questions or concerns in order to ensure the dissemination of accurate information.

CONSTITUENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Kim Sloane, ACEA President

Mrs. Sloane addressed the school board regarding the annual budget. She is hopeful that with the passing of legislation for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future that secured funding for three years that the school board is in a positive position to make good decisions for the 2020-2021 school year. This funding will allow the school board to allocate money to help students in poverty, to increase academic resources, and to increase staffing.

Mrs. Jackie Sams

Mrs. Sams addressed the school board on behalf of Mrs. Betsey Schwab, who was unable to attend. Mrs. Schwab has conducted or participated in hundreds of searches at the Schwab Company, for local non-profits, at the collegiate level, and in a superintendent search for the school board. She noted that in all of those searches, best practices were utilized. Mrs. Schwab feels that the best practice for the current superintendent search is to find an experienced and reputable search firm to help the school board iron out job requirements and to put a call out for resumes – nationwide. These firms can even help the school board screen applicants to narrow down the pool to the top 6-8, which will be interviewed via phone/video. After that, the top 3-4 applicants will be invited to Allegany County for an on-site interview with the school board as well as focus group sessions with various constituent groups (i.e. system teachers/staff, parents, students, community business people/leaders, non-profit groups, etc.). Mrs. Schwab feels that it is imperative that the school board does its due diligence in finding the best person for the position of superintendent in order to make ACPS the best they can be. She feels that our schools and everyone involved with schools and the community deserve nothing less.