

# BOARDROOM CHATTER

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### ***Recognition of Marching Bands***

The school board recognized the marching bands from Allegany, Fort Hill, and Mountain Ridge High Schools for their exceptional performances. The Allegany High School Marching Band came out in first place over eleven other bands in Group 1-O at the Tournament of Bands and ended their season with a performance score of 96.7. Allegany was also awarded Best Visual, Best Auxiliary, and Best Music. Allegany's band is under the direction of Kenneth Pfromm.

The Mountain Ridge Marching Band performed at the Maryland Marching Band Association State Championships at Towson University. With their 2022 production, "The Giving Tree," Mountain Ridge earned their first state title in their class, earning a score of 92.3 and receiving the award for Best Visual Performance. Their score set a new school record. Mountain Ridge's band is under the direction of Derek Shank.

The Fort Hill High School Marching Band won 1st place in group 3A at the Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast Championships and also won awards for Best Music and Best Visual. Fort Hill earned a historic high score of 95.93, breaking the school's highest score record for the third time in one season. The Fort Hill Band is under the direction of Dr. Joseph Thompson, and band staff includes Dave Armbruster, Matt Stoops, Whitney Cowgill, and Tim Growden.

### ***Present Proclamation Recognizing American Education Week and Educational Support Professional Day***

The school board presented a proclamation to Mrs. Kim Sloane, President of ACEA, recognizing November 13-19, 2022, as American Education Week and November 16, 2022 as Educational Support Professionals Day. The ACEA Educational Support Professional of the Year is South Penn Elementary School secretary, Mrs. Sherry Zembower.

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. Educational employees, be they teachers, guidance counselors, librarians, administrators, staff, bus drivers, custodians, or food services, work tirelessly to serve children and communities with care and professionalism, and they work together to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students. Schools are community linchpins, bringing together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders and elected officials in a common enterprise.

### ***Elementary Outdoor School Update***

Mr. Mike McGowan, ACPS Supervisor of Elementary Education, provided the school board with an update on this year's residential outdoor school for fifth graders held at the Western Maryland 4-H Center in Garrett County, Maryland. The facility is owned and operated by the University of Maryland Agricultural Extension Services 4-H Program, and the outdoor school program itself is operated by the Allegany County Board of Education. This year, 538 students, and 117 volunteers were in attendance.

## CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve minutes for meeting held on October 11, 2022.
2. Approve routine personnel actions for the period of October 1-31, 2022.
3. Receive school construction/maintenance report for the period of October 1-31, 2022.
4. Receive monthly financial report.

The campsite features rustic cabins for staff and students, heated shower houses with restrooms, and a spacious dining hall. Additionally, the center offers indoor and outdoor teaching facilities, covered pavilions, and a campfire circle. Students attend the camp in one-week sessions throughout September and October. ODS staff members are responsible for teaching classes, and regular classroom teachers in attendance assist with lessons. Parent volunteers assist with overnight supervision and provide assistance throughout the day as needed. Topics studied during the week-long sessions include erosion and soil, compass and GPS, cells and microscopic organisms, owl pellets, and the wetlands. The center provides students with unique outdoor learning opportunities and is equipped with a fresh water marsh, a bog, and a swamp.

Mr. McGowan also took a moment to remember long-time ACPS teacher, administrator, and ODS teacher, Mr. Frank Billard, who passed away this year.

### ***Transportation Inclement Weather Procedures***

ACPS Supervisor of Transportation, HB Martz, updated the school board about procedures in the event of inclement weather. The Allegany County Public School System considers a number of factors when making the decision to delay or close schools. The first consideration is for the safety of students traveling to and from school, including the 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 3:00 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 consult with the National Weather Service, NOAA, State Highway 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, 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 school two or three hours later than usual."

Announcements concerning delays or closures will be posted on the school system's website, [www.acpsmd.org](http://www.acpsmd.org), no later than 5:30 a.m. Following the website update there will be updates via the Blackboard parent notification, Facebook, Twitter, and the local media. Announcements to close schools during an initial two or three-hour delay will be made no later than 7 a.m. and 8 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 the sessions of afternoon pre-kindergarten. If a decision to delay or close school happens the night before, that will be made public no later than 7:30 p.m.

Parents are reminded that they are required to opt-in to the Blackboard notification system in order to receive notifications. Contact your child's school to confirm that you have given express consent to be contacted. Please note, 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 notification.

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 the day of the scheduled activity or event.

## INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT

### ***Review of Inclement Weather / Virtual Learning Plan***

For the first three (3) inclement weather days, asynchronous learning will be utilized, allowing students to login to Schoology to complete assignments **at any time after 9:30 a.m.** on an inclement weather day. The developmental level of students will be taken into consideration when determining the number of assignments per content area that will be provided on asynchronous days.

## INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT CONT.

If ACPS requires additional days for inclement weather beyond the first three, up to five (5) days will then be used. The format for those days will be a half-day of synchronous learning (real-time learning with a teacher) via the Schoology platform. Schedules for these inclement weather days can be found on the ACPS website [HERE](#).

As always, students without access to connectivity will be allotted up to two days following a closure to submit assignments to be counted present for a particular class.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students in middle and high school are encouraged to take their devices home each day during the winter months so that they are prepared in the event of a virtual learning day. Elementary principals will work with teachers and students to provide guidance about when elementary students should take their devices home due to forecasted inclement weather.

## NEW BUSINESS

### ***Consider Repealing Code of Ethics Policy Dated November 2021 (File: BCA)***

The school board voted unanimously to repeal the above policy.

### ***Consider First Reading of Code of Ethics Policy Dated November 2022 (File: BCA)***

The school board approved the first reading of the above policy, whose purpose is “to identify a code of ethics for Board members and applicable employees.” The policy states, “The BOE, recognizing that the system of representative government is dependent in part upon the people maintaining the highest trust in their public officials and employees finds and declares that the people have a right to be assured that the impartiality and independent judgment of public officials and employees will be maintained.”

### ***Vote to Meet in Executive Session December 13, 2022, as Necessary***

The school voted to meet in Executive Session on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, pending any appeals or unfinished business. The time and location of the meeting is TBD.