

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
RETREAT

Sunday, August 28, 2005

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in open session for retreat on Sunday, August 28, 2005, at 10:10 a.m. at the Marshy Point Nature Center, Marshy Point Road, Baltimore, MD. President Thomas G. Grzymiski and the following Board members were in attendance: Mr. Donald L. Arnold, Ms. Frances A. S. Harris, Dr. Warren C. Hayman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. JoAnn C. Murphy, Mr. Joseph J. Pallozzi, Ms. Joy Shillman, and Ms. Gabrielle Wyatt. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Brenda Stiffler, Administrative Assistant to the Board, representatives of community, county and employee association groups were present.

Mr. Grzymiski distributed the Board Norms, which were established in September 2003, and the framework of how the Board operates. Mr. Grzymiski stated that on an annual basis the Board would review the Norms and make changes where appropriate. Ms. Murphy suggested adding “students” under “Interact Respectfully With.” Mr. Grzymiski asked Ms. Stiffler to make the appropriate changes and disseminate.

Mr. Borunda entered the room at 10:20 a.m.

Mr. Grzymiski encouraged Board members to read “Tinkering Toward Utopia” by David Tyack and Larry Cuban.

Next, the discussion focused on the Board’s goals for the upcoming year. The round-robin discussion and criteria focused on seven areas.

Mr. Hayden entered at 10:25 a.m.

Board members worked in groups of four to discuss the issues below focusing on:

1. Board’s responsibilities
2. Working with constituent groups and legislation
3. Policy and budget

**BOE Issues Discussed at 8/28/05 Retreat
Marshy Point Nature Center**

Student Achievement	Facilities	Staffing	Communications & Marketing	Fiscal Management	Safe Schools	Information Technology
AP and SAT preparation	Get schools up-to-date and maintain	Pension reform for teachers	Flyer/booklet on legislative initiatives	Add (1) Board member to budget (new position) for 2005-07	Background checks for volunteers	Competitive staffing compensation
Success of average student	Attention to restrooms in all schools	Compensation for after-school work	Legislative presence in Annapolis	Workshop on fiscal issues	Replication of checks (i.e. cost)	
Attention to "at-risk" areas (i.e. meals, aft)	Energy resource management	Join forces with other groups using statewide improvements in pension reform	Get word out on BCPS accomplishments - locally and nationally	Educate Board members	SRO placement	
More frequent evaluation of students (i.e., DEBELS) Career and Tech focus for those students not attending college	Outside issues (i.e. pooling paint) Acquisition of land for a new high school in the northeast/central area	Legislative agenda should include pension reform Investigate why its teachers lose -- possible committee	Committee reports at Board meetings Meet with County Executive and County Council members	Hard data for decisions	Follow-up/transition back to comprehensive schools	
Continue to increase rigor (even in elementary schools)	Redistricting (short-term)	Experienced teachers in at-risk schools/classrooms	Lobbying more effectively	Would like a report on health care spending	Quality control/process check on students returning to school after alternative programs	
Middle school achievement (transitioning to high school)	Plan to increase maintenance budget	School facilities needs to provide a good learning environment	Communication between Board members			
	Explore alternatives for delivery systems and school sites		Packet for legislators of what BCPS has done with funds			
	Expand Preventive Maintenance System Would like an updated report on maintenance software system		Work with other other groups on legislative agenda Reflect on constituent groups' reports at Board meetings			
			Provide executive summary of reports at Board meetings			

Mr. Grzyski announced a brief lunch break at 12:35 p.m. Dr. Hayman exited the room at 12:36 p.m.

At 12:50 p.m., Board members came back together and reported on their conclusions.

Student Achievement	Facilities	Staffing
Monitor implementation efforts of Superintendent's strategies to ensure increased student achievement at all levels	More efficient use and increase of maintenance funding - Reduction of per capita/sq. ft. - Bring maintenance standards up to industry standards - Prioritize maintenance funding - Use of a system to monitor maintenance	— Support and coordinate efforts to address pension disparities — Look at addressing the need of acquiring experienced teachers for the "at-risk schools"

Communications & Marketing	Fiscal Management	Safe Schools
— Increase state and county aid so that we can attempt to address maintenance issues in all categories — Support County Executive plea for a \$400m state commitment — Support enhancements to pension system to improve our statewide ability to recruit from afar — Recognize and address the costs associate with working with group home children; their needs and their concentration in areas requires "above average" funding.	Ensure that Board members have the training and information necessary to efficiently use funding from all available sources	— Coordinate with County policy and County Executive to accelerate the placement of SRO's, particularly in alternative schools — Need more information on process for background checks on volunteers — Share report on transition efforts in move back to "regular" schools.

Mr. Grzynski stated that the priorities would be reviewed and sent to Board members to ensure that a consensus is reached.

BOARD MEETINGS

Mr. Grzynski shared his thoughts on ways to improve Board meetings. Some suggestions were:

- Improving time management, particularly the time and length of reports
- Establishing an ending time for the Board meeting
- Enforce the 3-minute time limit for speakers
- Designating every fourth meeting as a reporting session, with limited or no constituent group and public comment

Ms. Harris suggested receiving a one-paragraph report on the various committees. She also suggested that public comment be moved to the beginning of the meeting after the constituent groups.

Mr. Janssen liked the suggestion of having lengthy reports every fourth meeting. He also stated that the three-minute time limit to public speaking needs to be reinforced.

Mr. Arnold stated that constituent groups can put their reports in writing instead of speaking at Board meetings.

Mr. Hayden suggested two sign-in sheets: one for the public to address issues on current Board agenda and one for other issues.

Board members commented on the length of the presentations to the Board. Mr. Arnold stated that Board members should limit questions and comments to the issue at hand. He encouraged Board members to contact the appropriate staff member prior to a Board meeting with any questions on a particular report. Dr. Hairston requested that Board members direct all questions to him instead of staff. Mr. Grzynski stated that presentations to the Board should focus on the priorities and goals of the school system. Dr. Hairston stated that an executive summary of reports would be provided during the Board meetings.

Mr. Janssen expressed concern about the timeliness of reports to the Board.

Mr. Grzynski reiterated that the goal is for Board meetings to be more efficient and valuable. Board members discussed various ways to improve the public speaking at the meetings.

Mr. Pallozzi asked for clarification on limiting the number of speakers per topic.

Ms. Harris inquired about the status of combining the area educational advisory councils. Mr. Grzynski stated he would investigate and get back to the Board.

Mr. Grzynski stated he will work with the Vice President and the Superintendent on recommended agenda changes and presentations to the Board. Dr. Hairston reiterated the need to focus on the school system's goals and priorities, needing to look at the big picture and make sure there is a connection.

BOARD PRESENCE AT EVENTS

Mr. Grzynski asked for assistance from Board members to represent the Board at particular events. He would like to see a shift from the Board President attending and greeting at all events to other Board members participating and engaging with the communities and associations at various events.

Next, Mr. Grzynski reviewed the Budget and Audit, Building and Contracts, and Curriculum committees for the upcoming school year. He asked each committee chair to determine how to select a vice-chair and provide the information to Ms. Stiffler.

Mr. Arnold stated that the Policy ad hoc committee needs to continue. The goal of this committee is to ensure that all policies are reviewed and issues resolved prior to presenting to the entire Board. Mr. Arnold noted that the ad hoc committee reviews but does not approve policy changes. Dr. Hairston stated the need to make the best use of staff and Board resources. Mr. Janssen inquired about hiring a contractor short term to review policies and bring the list of policies needing updating to the Board for approval. Dr. Hairston suggested contacting the Maryland Association of Boards of Education's (MABE) LSA since BCPS is a member of the association to see what assistance they can provide us in terms of policy review. Mr. Grzynski recognized the need to determine the next steps and what process will occur for policy review.

With regards to the Human Resources committee, Mr. Grzynski stated he would investigate the need to continue this committee.

Mr. Grzynski reviewed constituent group dinners from previous years. Board members commented on possible dinners this year.

The retreat was concluded at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer