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# Board of Education President's Report

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January 11, 2011

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**Purpose:** The Board is continually asked questions concerning many areas of our educational system. They come from public testimony, inquires to Board members, public hearings on capital and operating budgets, and area advisory councils. Some are local to individual schools, while others cross the system. Each month during this portion of our meeting, I will provide a report which will be in response to some public concerns that Board members have become aware of. My responses will not address personnel, legal, or confidential matters.

## **Public Comment**

### **Issue: Overcrowding of Hampton Elementary School.**

**Response:** The Departments of Planning and Support Operations and Physical Facilities work collaboratively in developing a strategic plan for schools which are overcrowded. Based on student projections, the availability of relocatable classrooms and the ability of the school site to support relocatable classrooms, relief strategies are proposed to meet the needs of the students. These relief strategies follow a continuum which includes review of current room use to capital projects. The student enrollment at Hampton Elementary School is constantly monitored and strategies which may include relocatable classrooms will be used until the addition to that school is completed. The addition to Hampton is a priority of Baltimore County Public Schools and is included in the proposed FY 2012 Capital Improvement Program. Once funding for this project is obtained, staff will work with the Superintendent to schedule a date during one of the Building and Contracts Committee meetings to share the schematic design for the addition with the Board of Education. This is an opportunity for the public to view the design as well.

### **Issue: Quality of the Food and Nutrition Program**

**Response:** The Office of Food and Nutrition Services has available for students a comprehensive breakfast and lunch program that is nutritionally complete in meeting student needs and includes choices appealing to the diversity of students' tastes. BCPS is compliant with the federal food and nutrition guidelines that govern the school meal program. Some examples of the improvements to the meal program include incorporation of whole grain cereals, low and non-fat milk, and more dark leafy vegetables and fruit into the menu. BCPS is committed to continuing to pursue changes that benefit students. It is important to note that over 40% of the BCPS students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals.

**Issue: School Calendar**

**Response:** The Board of Education supports a school calendar which is developed for the purpose of accomplishing the business of education in improving student achievement. School-based administrators have been reminded by the Superintendent that the observance of a religious holiday is a lawful absence and that, whenever possible, the scheduling of tests and school-wide activities should be avoided on those days when it is anticipated that a large number of students may be absent due to the observance of a religious holiday.

**Issue: Dialogue with Elected Officials**

**Response:** The Board held a Legislative Forum with elected officials on December 15, 2010. It is the intent of this Board to host this forum annually.