TENTATIVE MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

Tuesday, February 22, 2011
(rescheduled to Wednesday, February 23, 2011)

The Board of Education of Baltimore County met in open session at 5:05 p.m. at Greenwood. President Earnest E. Hines and the following Board members were present: Mr. James E. Coleman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, was present.

Mr. Hines reminded Board members of community functions and Board of Education events scheduled in February, March, and April 2011.

Mr. Uhlfelder requested that the article, College Readiness and Workforce Challenges from the Principal Leadership magazine be placed in the minutes.

Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Articles, §10-508(a)(7), and upon motion of Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, the Board commenced its closed session at 5:08 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, met in closed session at 5:08 p.m. at Greenwood. President Earnest E. Hines and the following Board members were present: Mr. James E. Coleman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and the following staff members were present: Ms. Michele Prumo, Chief of Staff; Dr. Roger Plunkett, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction; Ms. Karen Blannard, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Schools; Ms. Patricia Lawton, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Schools; Ms. Barbara Walker, Assistant Superintendent, High Schools; Mr. Robert J. Barrett, Executive Officer, Community Outreach; Margaret-Ann Howie, Esquire, General Counsel; Ronald Miller, Esquire, Counsel to the Board of Education; and Ms. Brenda Stiffler, Administrative Assistant to the Board.

Mr. Miller provided legal advice on slander.

Board member, Mr. George J. Moniodis, entered the room at 5:10 p.m. Dr. Manuel Rodriguez, Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools, entered the room at 5:11 p.m.

Staff exited the room at 5:37 p.m.

Board member, Ms. Mary-Margaret O'Hare, entered the room at 5:52 p.m.
On motion of Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Mr. Parker, the Board adjourned its closed session at 6:11 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION

At 6:11 p.m., Board members discussed the following items:

- Board communication strategies
- Future Board agendas
- Board protocols

On motion of Mr. Coleman, seconded by Ms. Roddy, the Board adjourned its administration session at 6:20 p.m. for a brief dinner recess.

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Education of Baltimore County, Maryland, reconvened in open session at 6:48 p.m. at Greenwood. President Earnest E. Hines and the following Board members were present: Mr. James E. Coleman, Mr. Rodger C. Janssen, Ms. Ramona N. Johnson, Mr. George J. Moniodis, Ms. Mary-Margaret O’Hare, Mr. H. Edward Parker, Ms. Valerie A. Roddy, Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire, and Mr. David Uhlfelder. In addition, Dr. Joc A. Hairston, Superintendent of Schools, and the media were present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The open session commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, which was led by Dr. Lisa Williams, followed by a period of silent meditation for those who have served education in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

Hearing no additions or corrections to the Open and Closed Minutes of January 25, 2011, Mr. Hines declared the minutes approved as presented on the Web site.

Mr. Hines informed the audience of the sessions in which Board members had participated earlier in the afternoon.
WORK SESSION REPORTS

The Board received the following reports:

A. **Board of Education Policies** – Mr. Coleman reported that the Board of Education’s Policy Committee had met to consider the policies presented this evening, and that the committee recommends approval of these policies. This is the first reading.

- Proposed Deletion of Policy 2305 – ADMINISTRATION: Administrative Operations-School-Based Management
- Proposed New Policy 3128 – NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES: Non-Instructional Services-Board-Owned Vehicles
- Proposed New Policy 3170 – NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES: Non-Instructional Services-Quality Management System
- Proposed Deletion of Policy 3630 – NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES: Fees, Gifts, and Property Disposition-Disposal of Real Property
- Proposed Deletion of Policy 4112 – PERSONNEL: Professional-Permanent: Employment
- Proposed Deletion of Policy 4112.1 – PERSONNEL: Professional-Temporary: Employment
- Proposed Deletion of Policy 4112.2 – PERSONNEL: Professional-Temporary: Employment ( Principals)
- Proposed Deletion of Policy 4146 – PERSONNEL: Professional-Insurance
- Proposed Changes to Policy 5100 – STUDENTS: Enrollment and Attendance-Enrollment and Attendance
- Proposed Changes to Policy 5440 – STUDENTS: Services to Students-Child Abuse and Neglect
- Proposed New Policy 7260 – NEW CONSTRUCTION: Designing-School Marquee Signs

B. **Update on the Education Foundation** – Mr. David Uhlfelder reported that several months ago, the Foundation initiated a program open to all schools awarding a maximum $2,000 grant for projects aligned with the Blueprint for Progress as long as these projects meet one of three instructional themes: Financial Literacy; Green Initiatives and Environmental Sustainability; and Arts and Culture. The Foundation received approximately 35 applications. Ten were selected for funding.
WORK SESSION REPORTS (cont)

Currently the Foundation maintains 14 restricted scholarship funds and 20 restricted school projects. The Foundation also has an unrestricted fund from which projects such as this grant initiative can be funded. The June 30, 2010 audited financial statement is available for review by Board members and the general public.

Ms. Johnson asked how students access information about the resources and scholarships available through the Foundation. Board members and the public can access information about the foundation at its Web site (http://www.bcps.org/community/education_foundation/).

C. Report on Prekindergarten Programs – Ms. Sonja Karwacki, Executive Director of Liberal Arts, and Ms. Sharon Hoffman, Supervisor of Early Childhood, updated Board members on the prekindergarten program, including its legal and eligibility requirements. The goal of prekindergarten is to provide learning experiences to help children develop and maintain the basic early literacy and numeracy skills necessary to be successful in school. The program provides age-appropriate experiences to address the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of young children. Teachers use an interdisciplinary, whole-child approach with emphasis on language, literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. Prekindergarten programs are available in 77 schools with a total of 159 sessions. As of September 30, 2010, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) enrolled 3,024 students enrolled in this program.

Ms. Karwacki also reviewed other aspects of the prekindergarten program, which included:

- Funding and oversight
- Time allotments
- Curriculum
- Open court reading
- Classroom resources
- Small group instruction
- Assessments
- Benefits

Mr. Hines asked about the major challenges for educators. Ms. Hoffman responded that there are three challenges: 1) students entering the classroom who do not speak English; 2) students unaware how to interact with others students; and 3) poor vocabulary development.
WORK SESSION REPORTS (cont)

Mr. Coleman inquired about the 17% of students not ready for kindergarten. Ms. Karwacki responded that the data is disaggregated. A large portion of those children are at a level of readiness but not at full readiness. She stated that less than 3% of those students show no readiness.

Mr. Uhlfelder asked about teachers and parent interaction. Ms. Hoffman responded that teachers will share student schedules with parents, send home activities for parents to do with the student, hold parent conferences, and distribute weekly newsletters.

Ms. O’Hare asked how students who attend prekindergarten compared academically with students who do not. Ms. Karwacki stated that the data is disaggregated in the category of “prior care” in the 2009-2010 Maryland Model for School Readiness Report published by the Maryland State Department of Education. The composite score for students that had home care or informal education programs was 67%.

Mr. Janssen asked how the pre-3 program locations are selected and how the participants are chosen. Ms. Hoffman responded that a class is comprised of 15 students with 11 of who are economically disadvantaged. Each year, BCPS attempts to collapse a self-contained class and turn it into a general education class to have continuum of services so that students with special needs do not have to attend a self-contained class. As schools are selected, the system wants to ensure that where there is a 3-year program, there is also a 4-year program in place. Mr. Janssen asked how parents receive information about the pre-3 program. Ms. Hoffman stated that program is advertised through schools, community centers, newsletters, and county welfare services.

Ms. Johnson asked whether the school system tracks how well a student has progressed who has attended preK through Grade 12. Ms. Karwacki responded that BCPS currently tracks students from kindergarten to Grade 12 and the school system is looking at building a preK cube within the next month.

D. Report on College and Workforce Readiness – Dr. Roger Plunkett, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, shared with Board members that the Division of Curriculum and Instruction has begun to prepare an alignment document to illustrate how the Blueprint for Progress continues to position BCPS to best respond to state and national education reform efforts. Dr. Plunkett stated that the school system’s draft college and workforce readiness document is an attempt to centrally record critical college and workforce readiness efforts in all content areas, AVID, and our counseling program.
WORK SESSION REPORTS (cont)

Ms. Barbara Walker, Assistant Superintendent of High Schools, reported on BCPS current standing in the national and state standards in its high school graduation rate (86%), college enrollment rate (62%), and second-year college return rate (87%).

Ms. Karwacki stated that readiness requires the developmental maturity to thrive in the increasingly independent worlds of postsecondary education and careers, the cultural knowledge to understand the expectations of the college environment and labor market, and the employer-based skills to succeed in an innovation-based economy. Ensuring rigor and readiness includes:

- Implementing BCPS core curricula with a cross-curricular instructional approach embedded with college preparatory and AVID strategies.
- Facilitating monthly professional development on rigorous instruction, scheduling AVID demonstration lessons, observing AVID classroom instruction, and providing continuous feedback.
- Providing continuous professional development and training for AP teachers including sharing and exchanging AP “best practices.” (College Board AP training and systemwide professional development).
- Piloting new SAT English and Mathematics Instructional Support Resources for SAT Prep classes in two high schools.
- Implementing new SAT strategies through Wiki for SAT Prep teachers to share and exchange.

Next, Ms. Karwacki described to Board members BCPS’ counseling programs, which are guided by the Maryland State and American School Counseling Association to prepare students to be college and career ready.

Dr. John Quinn, Executive Director of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) reported on the following programs:

- Career and Technology Education (CTE) Program – Works to ensure that students graduate from high school both college and workforce ready. The Office of CTE continues to identify rigorous and relevant industry certification exams aligned with BCPS programs of study and to develop strategies to improve the pass rates and increase the number of students taking and passing the exams.
WORK SESSION REPORTS (cont)

- STEM – Course sequences have been clearly defined for K through Grade 12 to provide all students with the opportunity to take a variety of Advanced Placement (AP) level courses. Both science and mathematics content offices strongly support initiatives to improve student SAT performance through a partnership and close collaboration with CCBC, college readiness courses in science and math have been created so that BCPS seniors are prepared to enter CCBC eligible to take credit bearing courses.

Dr. Jessie Douglas, AVID Coordinator, shared a video clip with Board members of a former AVID student.

Mr. Janssen asked whether teachers received a stipend for sponsoring the robotics program with Dr. Quinn responding no. Dr. Peccia stated that science fairs are held throughout the county and that schools participate at their own level. Mr. Janssen asked what qualifications are required for engineering teachers. Dr. Quinn responded that in the secondary schools, under Project Lead the Way, teachers undergo training and receive certification to teach those courses. The struggle has been to incorporate the training and concepts on the elementary level. Through an NSF grant with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, BCPS is able to train elementary teachers in the STEM fields. At 14 elementary schools there are STEM resource teachers who have received special training in the STEM areas. Dr. Quinn noted that the plan for the upcoming year is to utilize MSDE STEM funding to have BCPS’ engineering elementary experts train other teachers.

Ms. O’Hare asked whether teachers in high schools have an opportunity to share best practices. Ms. Walker responded that one of the biggest successes of the reorganization has been the collaboration between curriculum and instruction and the assistant superintendents. Dr. Plunkett stated that a report on the restructuring will be presented to the Board at a future work session.

Ms. Johnson asked how college performance is followed. Dr. Thomas Rhoades, Executive Director of Research, Accountability, and Assessment, responded that the school system tracks every student leaving Baltimore County who attends college within the United States. Ms. Johnson asked whether the school system can track where students go into the workforce after high school. Dr. Rhoades responded that, at the direction of the superintendent, staff could generate such a report for the Board.

Mr. Hines asked that a summary paragraph of the presentation be placed in the Friday Letter.
INFORMATION

The Board received the following as information:

A. Financial Report for months ending December 31, 2009 and 2010

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hines made the following announcements:

- The Northeast Area Education Advisory Council will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, at Carney Elementary School beginning at 7:00 p.m.

- The Board of Education of Baltimore County will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, at Greenwood. The meeting will begin with an open session at approximately 5:15 p.m. The Board will then adjourn to meet in closed session. The open session will reconvene at approximately 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome to all open sessions.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned its meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe A. Hairston
Secretary-Treasurer

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In an address to Congress on February 24, 2009, President Barack Obama said, "In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a pre-requisite." Unfortunately, the College Board recently reported that "as of 2008, 58.9 percent of adults ages 25 to 64 across the nation had less than an associate degree" (Lee & Rawls, 2010, p. 12). Clearly, if significant changes in public education do not occur to ensure that young people are prepared for both college and work in a global economy, the nation's social and economic health will continue to weaken.

One of the key points of agreement among educators is that highly successful schools must disseminate best practices so that all can benefit. Eastern Technical High School, part of Baltimore County (MD) Public Schools, is a career and technical education (CTE) high school where students gain the knowledge and skills they need to pursue a career in 1 of 10 career pathways while also taking challenging academic courses at the gifted and talented, honors, and AP levels. Students are fully prepared for both higher education and the workforce. The school is a model for practices that achieve excellent results.

How Did This Happen?
In 1992, Robert Kemmery was appointed principal of the school, and his first order of business was to invite corporate and education leaders to visit the school and make recommendations for program improvement. The CEO of Lockheed Martin Aircraft told him, "You may as well close this place. You are preparing students for jobs that will not exist a few years from now." Thus, reform began at Eastern Tech in 1992 with substantial changes in focus and a name change from Eastern Vocational-Technical High School to Eastern Technical High School. Cosmetology, welding, and similar classes were phased out; career majors that were more attuned to the needs of the labor market and student interests were phased in. Those career majors include highly academic programs—such as engineering, information technology and allied health, teaching, law-related
The program prepares students for an upcoming banquet.

Students in the information technology program repair computers that have been damaged.

A student completes a water lab for her biology class.
The emphasis at Eastern Tech is on consistently being better. We know we are a good school—our data indicate that we are a very good school. But are we the very best that we can be?

Careers, and interactive media production—as well as more traditional technical programs—such as automotive technology, construction management, culinary arts, and business management and finance.

Students in Maryland must fulfill the requirements of a "completer" program to receive a high school diploma. In Baltimore County Public Schools, students may fulfill the requirements of one of three different completer programs: two credits of a world language and two electives, four credits in a chosen field, or two credits in an advanced technology and two electives. All students at Eastern Tech earn a "double-completer"—a minimum of four credits in their selected career major and at least two credits (most earn three or four) in a world language. Eastern Tech offers Spanish, Chinese, and Latin. In addition, all students are required to take a mathematics course each year—the current state graduation requirement is three courses—and most leave our school with five or six math credits. All students complete Algebra II by their sophomore year.

Although it has remained a CTE high school with 10 career major programs for students, Eastern Tech has effectively combined high-quality academic requirements and CTE to become one of the highest performing high schools in Maryland and the nation. It was named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 1997 and 2009, recognized as a top school by Newsweek Magazine and U.S. News and World Report, and named a 2010 National Blue Ribbon School. Eastern Tech has achieved this level of success by focusing on strategies in each of the core areas found in Breaking Ranks II: collaborative leadership; personalization; and curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Collaborative Leadership
The emphasis at Eastern Tech is on consistently being better. We know we are a good school—our data indicate that we are a very good school. But are we the very best that we can be? We choose to keep "great" as an unachieved goal so that we continue to focus on improvement. The leadership team at Eastern Tech believes in leading from the center and involving others in the decision-making process, including teachers, students, parents,
and community members. Improved student achievement and sustained success are the results of team efforts; teams have been central to the school's success in all areas, especially the AP program.

Eastern Tech's template for success in AP begins with various school teams that meet regularly. The core leadership team (composed of the content-area chairs and the administrators) and the career major leadership team (composed of a representative from each of the 10 career majors and the administrators) meet monthly, the ninth-grade interdisciplinary teams meet weekly, and the school improvement team meets once each semester.

Status meetings for each department are held every two weeks and are attended by the principal, the assistant principal assigned to the department, and the department chair. A typical status meeting agenda includes discussions about benchmark assessment data, classroom observation data, and curriculum implementation. Discussions center on trends in student subgroup performance.

The AP team, which includes all AP teachers, the AP coordinator, and the principal, meets four or five times each year to discuss best practices. Each of the core departments has created vertical teams that focus on grades 9 to 12 and also on data that has been gathered from Eastern Tech's feeder middle schools.

Our eyes and ears are on the content and skills that students need to succeed in college and the workplace. Each team and leadership group uses achievement data to adjust instruction. We have established school goals that are based on our district's Blueprint for Progress. Our goals for AP include achieving a 90% pass rate (we are currently at 84.3%), having 100% of the students who are enrolled in AP courses taking the AP exam (we are currently at 94.5%), and consistently enrolling more students in the AP program. Twenty-eight percent of Eastern Tech students currently take at least one AP course; our goal for the next school year is to improve this percentage to 32%. All teams focus on improvement in every meeting.

**Personalization**

The driving forces behind our school's success are the relationships that teachers have established with students and the relationships students have established with what they learn. Both are important for success in school, especially in AP programs. When students are asked why they want to take AP courses when they know that doing so will affect their social lives and possibly their GPAs, their most common response is "the teacher." Our AP teachers build relationships with students that are similar to those of successful coaches and players, but perhaps even stronger.

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Ms. Bonincontri helps a student review AP practice problems in her AP Calculus class.
The teachers have personalized their own content knowledge regarding AP courses through writing syllabi, taking courses, talking with other AP teachers, and serving as AP readers, but they know it is the relationships they build with the students that determine success. Those relationships are the result of matching students’ needs with effective school practices, such as recognition, acceptance, trust, respect, purpose, and confirmation. In addition to the daily delivery of instruction, teachers also make themselves available to students using technology—wikis, podcasts, texting, and e-mails—to help ensure students’ understanding and success.

Without strong relationships, other steps in our template for success could not be achieved. For example, our requirement that students complete AP assignments over the summer and remain in contact with their teachers—by accessing the class message board to clarify key points and discuss content—would not occur without strong, positive relationships. Our policy of honest grading would not be as effective without those relationships. Honest grading at Eastern Tech means that a student isn’t graded for their attendance or their effort, but rather is graded according to the level of knowledge they demonstrate relative to the AP exam. For example, a student who earns an A should be able to achieve a 5 on the AP exam, a student with a C should be earning a 3, and so on. Absent positive relationships, many students would opt out of AP courses for easier courses and higher GPAs.

**Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

The focus at Eastern Tech is on student achievement, and central to that is the business of teaching and learning. The curriculum is driven by the Maryland Content Standards, which will soon be supplanted by the education national standards. The standards help all teachers and administrators understand what students should know and be able to do in each high school course. The standards, coupled with a classroom-focused improvement processes, are the keys to Eastern Tech’s accomplishments. For example, the template for AP success is one of many best practices that guarantee student success.

**Template for AP Success**

The template for AP success outlines the various planning and AP activities that are held throughout the year.

Summer. Academic success begins with the work students do in the summer. At the conclusion of each year, the AP team holds a meeting to reflect on the program strengths and improvement needs for the next year. Vertical teaming in each department is essential to this process. Each vertical team looks at what students need to be successful in an AP course and creates a backward map of the skills they need to ninth grade—and, in some cases, back to middle school. The teams create summer assignments for students who will be taking AP courses the following year and establish interactive message boards so that students have continual access to their teachers throughout...
the summer months. Teachers use the summer to participate in professional development activities, such as national conferences or summer workshops.

Fall. When school resumes, each department revisits the decisions made by the vertical teams to make adjustments, if necessary, or to reaffirm direction. Honest grading practices are put in place to help students see the relationship between their daily work and success on the AP exams; although the equivalency is inexact, every effort is made by AP teachers to give students a realistic look at their potential score based on the grades they earn in the course. A back-to-school meeting is held with the AP team to review the scores from the previous year, discuss best practices, and develop goals for the new year.

Winter. Honest grading practices continue. During the winter months, Eastern Tech uses the AP Potential data that is sent by College Board and the input of staff members to identify prospective AP students for the following year. (AP Potential is a free, Web-based tool that allows schools to generate rosters of students who are likely to score a 3 or better on a given AP exam on the basis of their PSAT/NMSQT scores.) Those students and their parents are invited to AP Night to hear about the program. Personal letters are sent to potential AP students from each of the AP teachers inviting them to participate; however, any student who wishes to take the AP challenge may register for an AP course. Eastern Tech’s AP policy is open access, within reasonable limits and with appropriate counseling of students.

Spring. The AP exam is given. The AP team meets to reflect on the year and make plans for the future. AP teachers meet with next year’s AP students to discuss and assign meaningful summer assignments. Communication is established for the summer months.

Overall, the teachers and leaders at Eastern Tech have developed a culture of continual improvement by analyzing data and using data to inform instruction. The AP teachers reach out to other schools to share information and to develop their own skills. We have created a “farm team” of future AP teachers by assigning them to pre-AP courses and by having them attend AP conferences and other events. We even rename one of our classrooms each year in honor of the student who has the highest AP average and bring that student back for a special ceremony in his or her honor.

Results
As a result of the planning we do, Eastern Tech’s AP participation has increased by 400% in the last seven years, and 84% of the AP students in 2010 earned a passing score of 3, 4, or 5. Since the 2004–05 school year, the AP participation rate has jumped from 11% to 28%, and the number of tests taken increased from 264 to 678 during the same period. Of the total school population of 1,350 students, 85% are now enrolled in rigorous courses (honors, gifted and talented, or AP), and 81% of the school’s minority population is also enrolled in these rigorous courses, making Eastern Tech a model for other high schools in the country. PL

REFERENCES

Thomas G. Evans (tawarb@bcps.org) is the principal of Eastern Technical High School in Essex, MD.

Harry J. Cook (hcook@bcps.org) is chairman of the English Department at Eastern Technical High School.