

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: March 5, 2013

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: S. Dallas Dance, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION TO CLOSE THE EASTWOOD CENTER ELEMENTARY MAGNET SCHOOL TO ALLOW THE EXPANSION OF A SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN NORWOOD ELEMENTARY AND HOLABIRD MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

ORIGINATOR: Kevin A. Hobbs, Deputy Superintendent

RESOURCE PERSON(S): Karen Blannard, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Zone 1

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education approves the closing of the Eastwood Center Magnet Elementary School for school year 2013-2014 in order to allow the expansion of a STEM program for students in Norwood Elementary and Holabird Middle schools.

Attachment I – Executive Summary

Board of Education Meeting Executive Summary

March 5, 2013

At the January 22nd Board of Education meeting, we shared that the administration has been reviewing our underutilized school buildings, particularly Holabird Middle School, and exploring opportunities to expand the magnet program at Eastwood. Meetings were held with the principals from Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet, Norwood Elementary, and Holabird Middle Schools to discuss how the magnet program at Eastwood could be expanded to include more students in the Dundalk area. As a result, a recommendation was made to the Board of Education to close the Eastwood building in order to expand a STEM magnet program to students at Norwood Elementary and Holabird Middle schools.

As required by state regulation and the Office of Strategic Planning's procedures, the impact of the proposed closing was evaluated using the following factors: student enrollment trends; age or condition of the school building; transportation; educational programs; racial composition of the student body; financial considerations; student relocation; and the impact on the community in the geographic attendance area for the school proposed to be closed, and for schools to which the students will be relocating.

A joint community meeting, involving all three school communities was held in December where options were proposed to expand the Eastwood program. Individual school community meetings were held in December and January to discuss the proposals. Based on the overall but certainly not unanimous input from the affected school communities and what the administration has determined to be the best educational opportunity for students, the Superintendent is recommending that Eastwood, Norwood, and Holabird become a PreK-8 STEM magnet program, where the Norwood building would serve students in Grades PreK-3 as the lower school, and the Holabird building would service students in Grades 4-8 as the upper school.

Having reviewed all of the requisite factors, the educational benefit to students and better use of Holabird Middle School, which is under capacity, consolidating all three schools is an exceptional opportunity for students in the Dundalk area. By consolidating the three schools, there is no need for the building currently housing Eastwood. We are requesting Board of Education approval to close the Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School at the end of this school year, in order to expand a STEM magnet program for students at Norwood Elementary and Holabird Middle schools.

Board of Education of Baltimore County

6901 Charles Street

Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esquire, President

Towson, MD 21204-3711

RESOLUTION

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

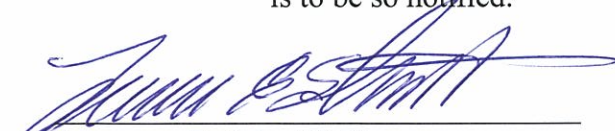
- WHEREAS, The Superintendent of Schools recommended to the Board of Education of Baltimore County a consolidation of Eastwood and Norwood Elementary Schools and Holabird Middle School, effective the beginning of the 2013-2014 School Year; and,
- WHEREAS, Part of the Superintendent's recommendation is to consolidate Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School, Norwood Elementary School, and Holabird Middle School into two schools with a Kindergarten through Grade 8 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) magnet program housed on two campuses; and,
- WHEREAS, Part of the Superintendent's recommendation is that the building currently housing Norwood would serve students from Pre-Kindergarten to third grade; the building currently housing Holabird would serve students in Grades 4 to 8; and that the building currently housing Eastwood would be closed; and,
- WHEREAS, The Board of Education held a public hearing on February 12, 2013, to permit concerned citizens an opportunity to submit their views on the proposed closing of Eastwood; and,
- WHEREAS, The Board of Education, through the Superintendent of Schools, notified the Baltimore County Department of Planning (formerly known as the Office of Planning and Zoning) of the Board's consideration of the closure of Eastwood and requested a written recommendation on the proposed action, pursuant to Section 4-115 (d) of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*; and
- WHEREAS, The Baltimore County Department of Planning has advised the Board of Education that it is agreeable to waiving the provisions found in Section 4-115 (d) of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*; and
- WHEREAS, The Board of Education concurs with the recommendation of the Superintendent that the aforementioned schools be consolidated and that Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School be closed, effective with the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, for the reasons and rationale set forth in the document attached to this Resolution and made a part thereof; and,


Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esq., President
Valerie A. Roddy, Vice President
Michael H. Bowler
Cornelia Bright Gordon, Esq.

Michael J. Collins
Rodger C. Janssen
Charles McDaniels, Jr.
George Moniodis
S. Dallas Dance, Secretary-Treasurer

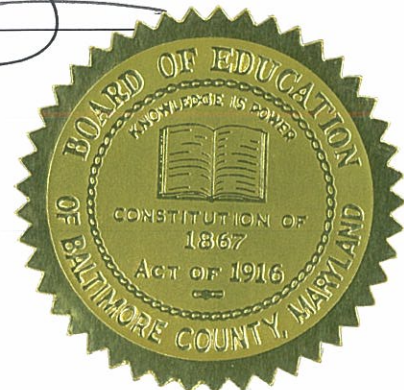
H. Edward Parker
David Uhlfelder
Romaine N. Williams, Esq.
Olivia Adams

- WHEREAS, Upon the closure of Eastwood, that building and school site are no longer needed for school purposes; and now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of Baltimore County hereby accepts and adopts the recommendation of the Superintendent that Eastwood and Norwood Elementary Schools and Holabird Middle School be consolidated and become two schools to be housed on two campuses with a Kindergarten through Grade 8 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) magnet program, with the building currently housing Norwood serving students from Pre-Kindergarten to third grade and the building currently housing Holabird serving students in Grades 4 to 8; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School be closed effective with the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That the Board of Education hereby agrees with the Baltimore County Department of Planning to waive the provisions contained in section 4-115(d) of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That the Superintendent be directed to take those actions necessary to implement the consolidation of the schools as set forth in this Resolution; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That the Superintendent be directed to notify the State Superintendent that the Board of Education finds that Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School site is no longer needed for school purposes and to seek approval for informing the Baltimore County Council; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That the Superintendent be directed to notify the community in the geographic attendance area of the schools to be consolidated of the Board of Education's final decision to close Eastwood; and be it further,
- RESOLVED, That this final decision of the Board of Education to close Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School may be appealed to the Maryland State Board of Education, if such appeal is submitted in writing to the State Board within 30 days after this final decision of the Board of Education and that the Community is to be so notified.


Lawrence E. Schmidt, Esq.
President


S. Dallas Dance, Ph.D.
Secretary-Treasurer

March 5, 2013



RATIONALE FOR THE CLOSURE OF EASTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed closing of Eastwood on the following factors:

(1) Student enrollment trends:

- Currently, Holabird Middle School is under-enrolled with a state-rated capacity (SRC) of 1,028 and a student enrollment of 645 students. Norwood Elementary School is over-enrolled with a state-rated capacity of 521 and a student enrollment of 610. Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet School's (Eastwood Center) capacity is 197 with 191 students enrolled. The proposed plan would help in balancing enrollments among the three schools and would make use of underutilized space at Holabird Middle.

(2) Age or condition of school buildings:

- This factor is not significant to the recommendation to close the Eastwood building and consolidate the three schools. It should be noted that the Eastwood Center is not air conditioned. Holabird Middle and Norwood Elementary schools are both air conditioned buildings.

(3) Transportation:

- The same quality of transportation services will be provided to all students.

(4) Educational programs:

- A PreK-8 continuum of services, where the lower and upper schools share the same mission and vision with a strong focus on STEM 21st century skills that will prepare students for college and the work place.
- Opportunities for grade-level and vertical-team planning to ensure strong teacher collaboration with student skill acquisition at each grade level.
- The development of a community-based magnet program that will expand opportunities for more Dundalk area students and serve as a direct feeder program into Dundalk High School programs.
- Both the lower and upper schools will have access to 21st century technology, including both on- and off-campus field experiences for all students.

(5) Racial composition of student body:

- This factor is not significant to the recommendation to close the Eastwood Center building and consolidate the three schools.

- (6) Financial considerations:
- Consolidating the three schools allows for more efficiencies and cost savings in staffing and in maintaining the building.
- (7) Student relocation:
- As students will be coming from the same home elementary schools (Berkshire, Colgate, Dundalk, Grange, Logan, Norwood, and Sandy Plains), no students will be “relocated,” and the attendance areas will not change.
- (8) Impact on community in geographic attendance area for school proposed to be closed and school, or schools, to which students will be relocating.
- The Eastwood Center Elementary Magnet Program draws its student population from the Dundalk area. The students who attend Eastwood for whom transportation is provided are from the following elementary schools: Berkshire, Colgate, Dundalk, Grange, Logan, Norwood, and Sandy Plains.