



Board Meeting

March 14, 2000

Karen L. Wolf, *President*
David H. Galbreath, *Vice President*
Eugene C. Chandler
Thomas D. Hess
Robert S. Magee
Robert B. Thomas, Jr.
Terry R. Troy
Catherine L. Brodo,
Student Representative
Jacqueline C. Haas, *Superintendent*
Secretary/Treasurer

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Education of Harford County met in open session on Monday, March 13, 2000, in the multi-purpose room of Aberdeen Middle School. Board President **Karen L. Wolf** called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Mrs. Wolf asked for a quorum call with all Board members being present. Board Member **Robert B. Thomas, Jr.** moved and Board Member **Eugene C. Chandler** seconded that an "Item G" be added to the agenda which would take the form of a report and possible action on issues involving legislation pending before the Maryland General Assembly during the 2000 General Assembly. The motion also called for the item to be added to future Board agendas through early April when the 2000 Session ends. The motion was supported by the Board unanimously. Board Vice President **David H. Galbreath** led those present in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA

MONTHLY REPORT ON PERSONNEL

Acting on the motion of Board Member **Terry R. Troy** and the second of Lt.

Col. (Rtd.) Chandler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Monthly Report on Personnel as of February 29, 2000, which provides the names of those employees who have left the school system, been placed on leaves of absence, or were newly employed. The report shows that there were 4,599.3 positions in the Harford County Public Schools on that date, and that a total of 593 employees have left the system so far this fiscal year.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kim Wenderoth of Flintlock Drive in Bel Air, a 10-month secretary, told the Board that "irrevocable damage" would be done to those employees in her position if the proposed negotiated agreement with the Harford County Educational Service Council, as it applies to 10-month secretaries, is adopted. She said the five percent proposed salary increase is more than overshadowed by what would amount to a seven percent longer work year for 20-month clerical personnel. She said she is certain the proposed agreement is "an oversight" and urged the Board to be "fair and equitable" in its dealings with the employees.

Sam Fromile of Brickhouse Lane in Fallston, a sophomore at Fallston High School, said he was speaking out on "the injustice and inefficient communication" concerning the proposed agreement with 10-month clerical personnel.

Jody Simpson of Green Valley Court in Bel Air, a 10-month secretary at Southampton Middle School, said that the proposed agreement would have her working ten additional days next year with no increase in base pay. She said the proposed taking away of from ten to 15 days in annual leave would mean that she would be working 10 ½ months for 10 months pay.

Carla Fromile of Brickhouse Lane in Fallston, representing 10-month clerical employees, said she understands it has been the Board's position for the past three years to take away the annual leave for employees in her category since no other 10-month employees have annual leave. She said the organization representing clerical employees (HCESSC) had negotiated for "the body as a whole and sacrificed the benefits of our smaller group." She said there had been a "misrepresentation" of the job requirements and a "thoughtless" settlement. She urged the Board to change the 10-month clerical work year to coincide with the 190-day teacher year.

Sherry Hare of Jackson Boulevard in Bel Air, representing the Harford Woods development in town, told the Board that her property is adjacent to Southampton Middle School and one-and-one-half miles from Bel Air Middle School. She said, if middle school students in her area are shifted from Southampton to Bel Air Middle School as proposed, and, in any case, for students in the area who now walk to Bel Air High School, a bus should be provided. She pointed to the "safety issue" of students crossing Rt. 22, Rt. 1, and Rt. 924 to walk to the Bel Air schools.

Pat Benedict of Talbott Square in Belcamp, president of the Harford County Council of PTAs, addressed the Board on "distressing news" involving the proposal for a charter school in Harford County. She said she is aware that a

"gentleman has approached several of you (Board Members)" with the plan. She said that HCCPTA in "no way, shape, or form" would support the use of "public money to support private schools." She said there would be "no compromise" by HCCPTA on the issue and urged that the proposal be brought out in a public forum. Mrs. Benedict said she has heard that there would be a meeting, possibly including the County Executive on March 15 and urged that Board Members not attend the meeting. "You lend credibility (to the effort) everytime you meet with them and I find it offensive," Mrs. Benedict added.

C. Patrick Galligan of Edwards Manor Drive in Forest Hill thanked the Board for its "wise decision" in excluding the Forest Hill area from possible redistricting to North Harford area secondary schools. He supported the suggestion of Mr. Thomas that a committee composed of politicians and the community be formed to address the issue of balancing enrollment and that the "narrow" remedy of redistricting may not be the best solution.

Jennifer Ruzicka of Hitching Post Drive in Bel Air, a graduate of Bel Air High School, said she supports the idea of getting a bus for students in that area. She said she walked to school and that her brother is due to begin high school in the fall and "I'd hate to see him not have a bus."

APPROVAL OF FOREST HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREA

Prior to consideration of the proposed Forest Hill Elementary School attendance area (and the redistricting of five surrounding elementary schools), the Board accepted public comment on the issue. **Kevin Keene**, of Glastonbury Way (Hampton Ridge) near Bel Air, said the process has been a "frustrating" one with the proposal to move students in his area from the Prospect Mill district to Hickory Elementary. He said the "flip-flop" on the issue will make Hampton Ridge students the losers. **Jeanne Reil**, also of Glastonbury Way, said that, if the redistricting as proposed is approved, students in her area would be assigned to their third elementary school in six years. She said the fate of children in the area was based on an illogical proposal that would have Hickory Elementary over 100 percent enrollment to capacity. **Joanne Frailer** and **Trish Feimer**, who live in the Henderson Manor Court area, adjacent to Hampton Ridge, asked that the eight or nine students located in that area be included with wherever the Hampton Ridge students are assigned. Currently, Henderson Manor Court students attend Bel Air Elementary. The proposed redistricting would have them attending Hickory Elementary.

Mr. Thomas moved that the recommendations of the redistricting committee and those of Superintendent Haas be approved with the exception of Hampton Ridge and Henderson Manor Court, both of which would be assigned to Prospect Mill Elementary School. In seconding the motion along with Board Member **Robert S. Magee**, Mrs. Troy proposed a "friendly amendment" which was accepted by Mr. Thomas establishing that bus transportation would be supplied for those students attending the Kiddie Academy day care facility in the Forest Hill district, with students who live in the Forest Lakes area being returned to that school and others being bused to the new Forest Hill school. Mr. Thomas said,

because the Hampton Ridge students have been moved so many times, and because he believes the right thing to do for children is to move them as few times as possible, his motion was intended to limit the impact. The Board voted five to two to support the motion (Board Members **Thomas D. Hess** and Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler dissenting), and Student Representative **Catherine L. Brodo** abstaining with her preferential vote.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD FOR EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION

Supervisor of Construction **Michael Reid** told the Board that bids had been opened for the modernization of the Edgewood Elementary School on February 23, 2000. He said that \$8,703,409.40 was available in state and local funding for the job. The apparent low bidder, Jack H. Kidd & Associates, had submitted a bid which, with nine alternates, was \$632,800 below the amount available. Mr. Reid said that the difference would result in a reduction of that amount to the school capital request being submitted to the County government for FY 2001. The construction supervisor said there were four valid bids submitted for the project, and that the Kidd firm had performed successfully on several Harford County Public School projects in prior years. Mr. Reid said, at the time the project had been conceived, the general construction manager system was not in use by the school system, explaining the process of extending the contract to a general contractor. Acting on the motion of Mr. Hess and the second of Mr. Galbreath, the Board voted 6 to 0 (Mr. Thomas was not present for the vote) to support the superintendent's recommendation to award the general contract for the Edgewood Elementary School modernization to Jack H. Kidd & Associates for a total of \$6,672,000. (The remainder of the funds available are being used for architectural fees, furniture, equipment, and related costs.)

CHANGE IN ABERDEEN HIGH SCHOOL 2001 GRADUATION DATE

Mr. Morrison told the Board that its 2000-2001 (next year's) calendar established a series of dates for commencement exercises beginning on Tuesday, May 29, 2001 and continuing through Friday, June 1, 2001, as usual. The Information Director told the Board that Superintendent Haas is recommending the change of the graduation date for one of those schools – Aberdeen High School – from Wednesday, May 30, to Thursday, May 31, 2001. He explained the Superintendent is suggesting the change to accommodate the schedule of Aberdeen High School Principal **David A. Volrath**, because Mr. Volrath's child, a senior at C. Milton Wright High School, is scheduled to graduate on Wednesday, May 30, the same night as Aberdeen's commencement exercises were originally scheduled. Mr. Morrison reported that Mrs. Haas believes, both, that a principal's place is with his school on graduation night, and that a father's place is with his child on his/her graduation night. He said the change would leave two schools holding commencement ceremonies on May 30 and three schools holding their exercises on May 31. Mr. Morrison added that the original rotation of schools would be restored for the 2002 graduations. Mrs. Troy moved and Mr. Galbreath seconded that the proposal be approved. The Board

voted 6 to 0 to endorse the change (Mr. Thomas was absent for the vote), and directed that the change for NEXT YEAR'S (2001) commencement ceremonies be publicized in every available forum.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

PRESENTATION – SCHOOL CALENDAR 2001-2002

Director of Public Information **Donald R. Morrison**, who coordinated the 2001-2002 School Calendar Committee, said the 19-member group had met on March 2, at Bel Air Elementary School, and had reached consensus on a proposed schedule for the 2001-2002 school year. Mr. Morrison pointed out that the Board had, in 1993, decided that a two-year calendar would be in place so that the public could better plan its schedule. He said the Board had also established a 15-person committee that year, adding four additional members at its February 28, 2000 meeting. He said that it is anticipated the Board would be asked to take action on the proposed calendar at its April 17, 2000 meeting. He added that the month layover of the proposal has traditionally been a time when the Board would receive comment on the recommended calendar. Mr. Morrison introduced **Linda Drysdale**, who represented the Aberdeen area on the committee, and was chosen as chair for the group in order to make the report to the Board. She introduced other members of the committee who were in attendance and thanked **William Ekey**, director of secondary education, **Pat Skebeck**, director of elementary education, and **Deborah Heiberger**, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, who had attended the committee's March 2 meeting as ex-officio members. Mrs. Drysdale reported that the committee is suggesting a 184-student day calendar (with four inclement weather days to be dropped if they are not used). She said, following Board policy, the school year would open after Labor Day, September 4, 2001 and would end on June 13, 2002. She said that the schedule would have five teacher inservice days prior to the beginning of the school year, one on Monday, November 5, for elementary school conferences, and four after the end of the school year for students – June 14, 17, 18, and 19 – following the model established for the 2000-2001 school year. Mrs. Drysdale said there would be two closings for students and teachers on the two Jewish High Holy Days of September 18 (Rosh Hashanah) and September 27, 2001 (Yom Kippur). Schools would be closed for students and teachers on Friday, October 26, for the Maryland State Teachers Association Convention, and the half day preceding Thanksgiving, November 21, as well as the Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving, November 22 and 23. Mid-year holidays would be observed from December 24, 2001 through January 1, 2002 with students and teachers returning on January 2. Schools and offices would be closed on January 21, 2002 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and on Monday, February 18, 2002 in observance of President's Day (though this day would be used as a fifth inclement weather makeup day, if necessary). Spring break would take place on Thursday and Friday, March 28 and 29, and Monday, April 1, 2002.

Schools and offices would be closed on Monday, May 27, 2002 for Memorial Day. Commencement ceremonies would take place from Tuesday, May 28, through Friday, May 31, 2002.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent **Jacqueline C. Haas** invited **Tom Ackerman**, Joppatowne High School principal, to speak to the Board. He said that CBS-TV's "48 Hours" had called and expressed a desire to return to the school and do a follow up on its "Class of 2000" feature which had been filmed at the school more than three years ago when the current seniors were freshmen. Mrs. Haas said the school system is "thrilled" at the opportunity. Mr. Ackerman said the proposed show could air in June. He added that Joppatowne High's rescheduled Net Weekend would take place on March 25 beginning at 8:00 a.m. and that the school's new baseball stadium would open that same day.

Mrs. Haas said that enrollment in the schools is following a similar pattern to last year. She said the elementary school enrollment was up by 103 since September and that 17 schools (out of 31) are at 105 percent enrollment to capacity or greater. She added that the middle school enrollment is down by 44 students since September with two of the eight middle schools at 105 percent or greater enrollment to capacity. In the high schools, Mrs. Haas said, there has been a loss of 297 students since September and only Harford Technical High School is currently over capacity (a situation which will change when the addition now underway is completed later this spring). Mrs. Haas said, overall, the enrollment at the end of February is down by 132 students since September, standing at 39,216 on February 29, 2000.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Thomas said that he and three other Board Members – Mrs. Wolf, Mrs. Troy and Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler had taken part in a tour of three magnet schools in Baltimore County that day and recommended that those members and others available take part in other tours, especially of an agricultural program at Francis Scott Key High School in Carroll County. Mr. Thomas said the tour had been illuminating. Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Chandler said that he and his wife had attended Joppatowne High School's performance of "The Wizard of Oz" the previous weekend and complimented the school's performers on an excellent job. Mrs. Troy pointed to the "awesome productions" done throughout the county by drama groups. Mr. Thomas said he had attended the previous weekend's Destination Imagination competition and offered the Board's recognition of the teacher and other adults who sponsor the teams and the work done by students. Mr. Hess said that he is the uncle of students attending another Baltimore County magnet school program (Patapsco High School). He said that the school had gained 400 students since the magnet had been started there. He said, while the visits are important, it is essential that the school staff put together the programming and funding requirements to implement such a magnet in Harford County since the process would take more than a year to

implement. Mr. Hess, in addressing Mrs. Benedict's comments earlier in the evening, said the Board had voted not to support charter schools last year, even though a recommendation had been made by the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) had been to support the legislation since it was almost certain to pass. He said that he hopes the Harford County government administration would defer to the Board any person or group which approached it with a proposal for a charter school, and that the administration would respect the position on the topic taken by the Board. Mr. Hess said he feels any private session at which public officials would discuss a charter school proposal would be "inappropriate," and that any such proposal should be referred to the Board of Education.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting on the motion of Mr. Galbreath and the second of Mrs. Troy, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The next regular business meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, March 27, 2000 in the multi-purpose room of Aberdeen Middle School, beginning at 7:00 p.m.. A work session on Managing Growth and Balancing Enrollment will be held at the same location and time on Tuesday, March 28, 2000. On April 8, 2000, starting at 9:00 a.m. at the HEAT Center in Aberdeen, the Board will hold a work session on the budget, with a similar session to be held at Fallston High School on April 11, 2000, starting at 7:00 p.m. The Board will move its regular business meetings to Fallston High School for the months of April, May, and June, with the April sessions to be held on April 10 and 17, both starting at 7:00 p.m. in the school's theater.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Board meetings or other matters affecting the Harford County Public Schools, contact the system's Director of Public Information, 410-588-5203; or call the system's Customer Relations Action Line, 410-638-0022 (which can also be used as a 24-hour-a-day tip line for safety concerns).

The Harford County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. Inquiries related to the policies of the Board of Education of Harford County should be directed to the Director of Public Information at 410-588-5203.