

**Deputy Superintendent of Schools  
School Administration and Operations**

**Parent Advisory Committee –Year-end Meeting  
Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building  
Board Room  
April 28, 2009– Group Notes**

**School system staff present:** James E. Richmond, Superintendent of Schools, Ronald G. Cunningham, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Butch Arbin, Instructional Technology Resource Teacher, Connie Mouton, Coordinator of Minority Achievement and Multicultural Education, and Christine Mais, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Thirty-seven parents representing 24 schools attended the last meeting of the **Parent Advisory Committee** for school year **2008-09**. Mr. Cunningham opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m., by reviewing the agenda and reviewing the information provided regarding the system's response to the swine flu. He referred to the letter with information on the reverse that will be sent home with students by the end of the week. He also discussed communication procedures to inform parents of any serious incident occurring in a school and he noted the change in the calendar for the last day of school. The swine flu information letter and change of date information was provided to parents with the agenda. He also highlighted recent system events including the dedication program for Mary B. Neal Elementary (held Friday) and the recent MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) competitions held in April.

**Superintendent's Remarks**

Mr. Richmond thanked everyone for attending and reminded all that Maryland was number one in the nation for public education and attributed this to the best early childhood program in the country. He stressed reading is the key to academic success and this has been the focus in Charles County for last 13 years. He shared this is his 43<sup>rd</sup> year in Charles County, he began his career here as a teacher in 1966; he renewed his fourth and final contract as Superintendent and promises he will continue to move the system forward during his last four years. He emphasized his philosophy that Charles County Public Schools should have a world class image... and a diploma to be valued with the highest reputation for quality education. After discussing the budget presented to the commissioners, he assured everyone he will not eliminate programs that are working for students. His goal is to maintain and keep programs in tact; programs might be reduced in length (i.e., a five week summer program, might go to four weeks) but will not eliminate the programs which have proven successful. He highlighted the following:

**Budget**

- **The commissioners' public hearing - May 20 – school system presentation time – 6:00 p.m.**
- Budget agreement reached with commissioners withdraws the maintenance of effort
- Budget cut amounts to \$8-9 million
- Stimulus money – approximately \$14 million is earmarked for specific programs: teacher retirement; special education and Title I; money cannot be used for other programs.
- State and county gains over the last two years (approximate increase of \$15 million – now wiped out)

**New High School**

- The new high school is back on; commissioners agreed to a “cap” or target for costs (\$79 million) and will stay out of the design process leaving the school system to design the building as needed to implement the instructional plan
- Cost of building is formula driven by the state based on the number of students
- Project will go back to the state in October for planning approval; if approved, expect to bid the project in spring 2010; school will open (hopefully) 2013-14.
- The project will include all components from the original design including a swimming pool and the digital classroom, bid as one project, and include “green” technology.

- This school will open as a full high school, not as a middle school, and will require rezoning the entire county high school attendance zones. A committee will be formed to review enrollments at all schools and develop redistricting proposals for consideration.

Mr. Richmond also stated that during his tenure four schools were built, all came in under budget, all quality buildings built to last. New buildings are also environmentally friendly and it is hoped the new high school can be built as a “green building.” He also said Senators Mikulski and Cardin are very supportive of the new high school.

### **Graduation 2009**

- Every senior in the Class of 2009 is “accounted for” with only about 40 still needing to meet graduation requirements. Staff and teachers in the high schools are working diligently with these students to work through the individual issues.
- Graduations are on June 1 and 2 with all but North Point at Show Place Arena
- North Point’s first graduation is at the school; this was a school committee decision

### **Mr. Richmond then opened the floor to questions.**

Q – Are you planning to go to the next level from the International Baccalaureate – specifically beyond the current level of AP calculus?

R – Working with the College of Southern Maryland; there are state regulations, but we are looking into it now.

Q – Any plans to renovate some of the older schools – such as Dr. Mudd?

R – Trying to take care of some of the issues using local dollars; long list of work projects; replaced many single ply roofs with four ply roofs, which have a much longer life expectancy.

Q – Clarify – new high school construction money is separate from renovation money?

R – Yes, limited dollars available at the state level; state preference is to fund new construction

Q – Green schools – are there any plans to connect other schools with “green” technology.

R – Yes, as much as possible given the economic situation.

Q – When talking about North Point graduation and evaluating the way it goes this year, you sound concerned, can you expand on that?

R – Yes, concerned about traffic flow for one and seating on bleachers. The stadium was built to allow seating for 5,000, but most of that is on bleachers... not very comfortable. The cross-county connector was supposed to provide access to Route 210 – that has not happened and we don’t know when it will happen.

Q – With a child at Lackey graduating next year, can I look forward to graduation at North Point or will it stay at the Equestrian Center?

R –That is an individual school decision.

Q – Any chance of accelerating the process for building the high school if the growth in the county increases?

R – It’s a state issue – need to get funding approval and that process begins in the fall.

Q – Do you know how many students apply to North Point and can’t get in? Will the new high school help this?

R - The new high school will not have the career and technology options. We are looking at some other options to expand some of the program offerings currently at North Point... programs that can be offered in regular classroom settings, such as engineering. We are also offering programs at other high schools, such as biotechnology now at La Plata. We are also looking at the possibility of using some of the facilities at the Stethem Educational Center, which was formerly the career and technology center.

Q – My child is in first grade and not reading on grade level? What programs are in place to help?

R – Reading Recovery – but you should speak to your principal about your concerns.

Q – Our family income is too high to qualify for Head Start – is the system doing anything for families that exceed the criteria?

R – Trying to break the barrier on this, agree all children should have the opportunity for a solid foundation; looking at the possibility of using some “stimulus” money.

Q – What is the latest on Parent @ School?

R – Still looking for a replacement product compatible with our system; several other systems have shared information and we hope to have something in place early next year.

Q – Will it have the homework feature and will it be mandatory for teachers to use?

R – Yes, we hope to include and yes, it will be the expectation for it to be used.

Mr. Richmond closed his remarks emphasizing Charles County has great teachers and staff; the early childhood program is solid; the technology is first in the state, and we will continue programs that are working for students. He reiterated reading and comprehension is the basis of a solid foundation for children and the programs in Charles County will continue to focus on good reading skills for all students at every level. He thanked everyone for their support.

## **Instructional Programs Update**

### **❖ STEM Presentation – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

Butch Arbin presented the STEM initiatives across the system at every grade level. His presentation focused on the system's efforts, which have been progressing over the last decade. He noted that in Charles County Public Schools, STEM is a philosophy...not an acronym. Highlights from the Power Point presentation include:

#### **STEM Leadership with state, national & world vision**

#### **MID-ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR**

#### **Greatest Concentration of STEM in the World - Charles County, Maryland at the Center**

#### **STEM Initiatives are critical for the future success of Charles County**

- 21st Century workforce development
  - STEM careers
  - STEM support careers
- Increase enrollment in post-secondary STEM education
- Economic Development in Charles County
- Indian Head Science and Technology Park
- Waldorf Science and Technology park
- BRAC - Base Realignment and Closure
- It is critical that our students pursue careers that have adequate earning potential and sustainability and are adaptable to changes in the technological world we live in.

**CCPS Pre-STEM Initiatives** - Long before the STEM Education Act...the vision to make CCPS a leader in science, technology, engineering, math was established with:

- Dedicated elementary science teachers
- Project Lead the Way introduced in 2003
- 100% Wireless
- IP Telephony
- CISCO Academies
- North Point High School for Science, Technology, and Industry

**Mission:** To offer rigorous PreK-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs (STEM) that prepare CCPS students to excel in America's 21st Century work force.

#### **Vision for All Students**

- To *introduce, motivate, inspire, engage, prepare* and *encourage* a greater number of ALL students to be our next generation of inventors, explorers, engineers, innovators and scientists who will lead U.S. achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics while returning us to a world leadership position in STEM.

#### **Goals**

- Attract and prepare students at all educational levels to pursue STEM coursework
- Attract students to pursue postsecondary degrees (2 year through PhD.)

- Provide students and teachers with STEM related growth and research opportunities
- Expand the capacity of the school system to promote STEM education
- Support professional development for teachers – our greatest STEM resource

### **STEM in Middle School**

- Science and math enrichment classes
- Trans-disciplinary curriculum that connects engineering, math, technology, language arts and science
- All sciences integrate technology
- Pre-Engineering opportunities
- STEM Partnerships

### **STEM in High School**

- Advanced placement and enrichment opportunities
- North Point High School for Science, Industry and Technology
- Advanced technology applications
- Engineering courses and pathways
- 21st century workforce development opportunities
- STEM Partnerships

### **Charles County Interactive Science and Engineering Project**

- 2008 Summer Enrichment Opportunity
- SY 2008-2009 Program Expansion
  - Maryland received only National Defense Education Program Grant (Charles & St. Mary's)
  - 3 CCPS Elementary Schools
  - 3 CCPS Middle Schools
  - Challenge/Theme – “Save the Bay”
  - Each site has an engineer and College of Southern Maryland engineering students
  - Teacher training provided
  - All students are eligible to participate
- 2009 Summer Opportunity Expansion
  - 100 Grade 5 students
  - 100 Grade 7 students
- SY: 2009-2010 Program Expansion
  - First High School programs
  - Additional Elementary Schools
  - Additional Middle Schools
  - Each site includes an engineer and College of Southern Maryland engineering students
  - Teacher training will be provided
  - All students are eligible to participate

### **Funding**

MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education)

- STEM Planning Grant
  - September 1, 2007 – December 31, 2008
  - \$10,000
- STEM Initiative Grant (Competitive)
  - September 1, 2008 – December 31, 2009
  - \$100,000

### **Community and Industry Partners**

NAVSEA Warfare Center – Indian Head, NASA, Energetics Technology Center (located in La Plata), Naval Air Station – Patuxent River, National Defense Education Program, Department of Defense, CISCO, National Space Foundation, Charles County Chamber of Commerce,

### **College and University Partners**

College of Southern Maryland, UMBC (University of Maryland – Baltimore Campus), UMCP (University of Maryland – College Park), Johns Hopkins University, Stevenson University

## National Space Foundation

Summer Teacher Institute 2009

6 sessions - 50 teachers in each (across curriculums and grade levels)

300 Pre K - 12 teachers

### STEM Presentation – cont'd

- According to former Secretary of Education Richard Riley . . . the top 10 jobs that will be in demand in 2010, didn't exist in 2004.
- The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that today's learner will have 10 to 14 jobs by age 38.
- We are currently preparing students for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that haven't yet been invented in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.

### ❖ Academic Road Shows

Connie Mouton shared some of the parent comments and feedback from the road shows already held. She also noted although not well attended, everyone in attendance gave positive feedback (at events already held). She asked the group to share their thoughts on how to improve communication and encourage parents to attend. The road shows are grouped in clusters as follows:

- Lackey: Gale-Bailey, Indian Head, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy, J. C. Parks, Henson, and Gen. Smallwood
- La Plata: Dr. Higdon, Matula, Mitchell, Somers, Piccowaxen
- McDonough: Dr. Brown, Eva Turner, Dr. Craik, Stoddert
- North Point: Diggs, Middleton, Wade and Davis
- Stone: Dr. Mudd, Malcolm, Martin, Ryon, Neal, Hanson
- Westlake: Barnhart, Berry, Jenifer, Mattawoman

### Comments shared by the audience:

- Principals of each school in the cluster should issue personal invitations to a set number of parents
- "Use" the kids – give them rewards; provide incentives if parents attend
- Issue tickets to parents
- Information was very limited; communicate more information about the sessions planned to drum up interest
- Principals and vice-principals could hand out information flyers to parents picking up their children at the end of the day
- Information very lacking; parents not sure what this is all about
- Seems like some principals weren't sure either...
- Use email to communicate along with the SynreVoice system
- Don't be discouraged with something new, sometimes it takes a year or so of doing something new for it to catch on
- Get the word out; send reminders; provide information at the back-to-school events
- Westlake received many responses, but many didn't show up
- Advertise in Maryland Independent
- Didn't get any information from Hanson
- Work with middle and high schools to get information out – elementary seems to do a good job
- Provide incentives for kids – free homework passes works for everyone, no matter the grade level
- Group clusters by attendance zone; didn't seem to make sense for me to go to this at North Point when my kids will go to Lackey
- Advertise open attendance at any event; parents don't have to go to the one (in their cluster group)
- Clarify the message; what is the message – that was not clear; what will the parent get in exchange for giving up two hours of time; explain why it is important
- Talk to parents
- Provide childcare activities (*note: several parents spoke up to say plans did include activities for young children including movies, crafts, refreshments, and a magic show*)
- Provide transportation for parents who want to come, but don't have a way to get there

## Closing Remarks – Mr. Cunningham

In closing, Mr. Cunningham noted additional achievements of students and schools in local or regional competitions where students will now compete at the state level. He also noted Ginny McGraw, principal of J. P. Ryon Elementary is the Washington Post Distinguished Educational Leader for Charles County and Samantha Shelton, a Lifeskills teacher at Milton M. Somers Middle School was named the Washington Post Agnes Meyer winner for Charles County.

He asked for a show of hands for the number of schools with PTA's and PTO's. He stated when most schools had PTA's, there was an active county council and the system was able to communicate and provide information to parents through the county council. It seems most schools now have PTO's and no longer operate under the PTA umbrella. The system would like to establish a way to communicate to all parent teacher organizations and he asked parents to send him their ideas and suggestions in this regard. He also asked everyone to use the index cards on the tables to provide feedback on what they liked (+) or disliked (-) about these meetings and the format. (*Questions and comments from the cards found at the end of these minutes.*) Mr. Cunningham thanked everyone for their commitment and participation with this committee this year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.



**Schools without representation at this meeting:** Dr. Brown, Dr. Craik, Parks, Turner, Davis, and Mattawoman.

All school representatives, alternates, and principals receive a copy of the notes from these meetings. If a representative from one of the above schools did attend this meeting, please contact Chris Mais at 301-934-7320 to make the correction.

**Reminder:** if the school representative cannot attend the PAC meeting, the principal or designee should contact the school alternate. The person listed as the school representative is sent reminder notices; however, alternate representatives are welcome to attend. The parent handbook/calendar lists Parent Advisory Committee meeting dates for the school year.

**Handouts:** Swine flu letter

### Meetings for 2009-10

- October 27, 2009; January 26, 2010; April 27, 2010

Time and Location for PAC meetings: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Starkey Administration Building - Board Room

### Contact Information:

Deputy Superintendent: 301-934-7320/Email: [rcunningham@ccboe.com](mailto:rcunningham@ccboe.com)

- School Administration and Operations – Mrs. Dorsey or Mr. Cornette (Parent Concerns/School Issues): 301-934-7364
- Email: [pdorsey@ccboe.com](mailto:pdorsey@ccboe.com); [jcornette@ccboe.com](mailto:jcornette@ccboe.com)

Division of Instruction: 301-934-7369 – [jestep@ccboe.com](mailto:jestep@ccboe.com)

Communications: 301-934-7220 – [komalley@ccboe.com](mailto:komalley@ccboe.com)

**Charles County Public Schools:** [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com)

*This site provides links to every public school in the county, central office administration, the school year calendar of activities, and other resources in the county and state. Emergency closing information is found on page 10 of the parent/handbook calendar, also on the website. Emergency closings and other announcements are also made via the 24 hour information line, 301-934-7410 or 301-870-3814.*

**Maryland State Department of Education:** [www.msde.state.md.us](http://www.msde.state.md.us)

(This site provides statewide information and links to school, system, and state report card information, parent council, and other resources.)

## **Parent Advisory Committee** **Questions/Comments**

I enjoy attending the PAC meetings and information given. How do you ensure that the information is disseminated to the schools? Thanks for the opportunity.

*Response – information shared at the PAC meeting is shared with principals through the group notes sent by email; much of the system information is shared with principals in their regular monthly meetings and they share with their school staff at meetings and with parents through newsletters and parent/teacher meetings.*

Really appreciate all the information provided at each meeting. Additionally, the email reminder is much appreciated. Love finding out what's on the horizon for Charles County schools, thank you.

- + Great communication with parents
- + Very appreciative of these meetings
- + Good amount of meetings and length
- + Very packed with information
- Asked questions at second meeting and never received responses

*Response: verbally answered questions at this meeting and assured follow-up.*

Offer the next level of AP calculus (CAP Calculus BC) for students who will max out in math courses before 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

+ Meetings are informative and helpful. I find out about many topics firsthand, sometimes things I would not have found out otherwise.

First time attendee: keep meeting length to one and a half hours – no longer. Good info – but could have been streamlined. More discussion could happen after for those interested.

The only negative I have is that of the three meetings this year, I was only notified of one and it was cancelled. I enjoyed being here. You have given me a lot of great information to take back to other parents at the school, information that we do not normally come by.

*Response: reminder cards are sent to all “representatives” and principals receive reminder cards for “alternates.” We ask principals to check with their “rep” to ensure attendance and to arrange for the alternate if the “rep” cannot attend. The dates for these meetings are included on the parent handbook/calendar each year. The dates for 2009-10 are listed in the information section of the group notes on page 6.*

Some parents come straight from work and have left early in the day. My suggestion is that if you have lots of information to provide you have more meetings that are shorter. After an hour we begin to tune out.

I liked coming to the PAC meetings because they are very informative and I appreciate the opportunity. I will continue as long as I can.

A+ - these PAC meetings have been very informative to providing explanations regarding why things are being done the way they are and what the future plans to continue improving of children's education. The opportunity to ask those who have the most influence and knowledge is invaluable.

+ My first meeting, I was a fill-in. Very informative.

+ I enjoyed them all - thank you!

- Suggest more interaction like tonight.

I really appreciate these meetings. They gave me an opportunity to learn about the school system at a more in-depth level. I would like to know how we as parents can take a more active role and be more involved in process/decision making/recommendations (as appropriate) instead of being passive participants.

+ I have thoroughly enjoyed the PAC meetings this year. They have been informative and relevant.

I loved the STEM presentation. I would really like to see Parent @ School back as soon as possible.

- + Topics were informative and audience appropriate
- + Question and answer sessions always entertaining
- Getting the same reps to attend all meetings vs. only one or two – that way info gets back to school to be shared. I am upset that people at this PAC meeting said they knew nothing about “road shows” because a presentation was given at the February meeting that was informative.

Thanks for another great year. I miss the pens!

- + Very informative – I like the Qs & As
- McDonough needs dollars for renovation, please...
- + Meetings are great to hear about new happenings in the school system
- +Great to see the staff from the Board

Improve communication!

### **Questions/Comments from February PAC meeting**

How do you find out about “Drive to Survive” program? Who can enroll?

*Response: this is an independently run program; not funded or sponsored by the school system; anyone can enroll – there is a cost involved; contact National Institute of Vehicle Dynamics, 301-515-0539 or [www.drive2survive.org](http://www.drive2survive.org)*

“What Counts” – can we be supplied results and answers to share at PTO meetings?

Can we get raw data from both September and PAC for the “What Counts”?

*Response: We will share this request with the Board members for a response.*

Can I get more information about cluster road show?

*Response: please check with your school principal.*

McDonough is an older school, any plans to make improvements? Space issues with after school activities.

*Response: please share your specific concerns with your principal.*

### **Comment:**

“What Counts” – 100 people is a very small statistical population to determine what counts in schools compared to the number of enrolled students. You need to have more opinions, maybe send out the summary to all parents as a survey. Perhaps do the same at business group meetings (Jaycees, etc.). You need a larger sampling or else the data could be skewed.