

Minutes (approved March 5, 2007)
Meeting of the County Council and the Howard County Board of Education

The meeting was called to order by Board of Education Chairperson Diane Mikulis at 8:25 a.m. on February 23, 2007, in Board Room B, Howard County Board of Education.

Council members present: Calvin Ball, Mary Kay Sigaty, Jennifer Terrasa, Courtney Watson; Greg Fox arrived at 8:32 a.m.

Board of Education members present: Diane Mikulis, Frank Aquino, Larry Cohen, Sandra French, Ellen Flynn Giles, Patricia Gordon; member-nominee Janet Siddiqui joined at 8:45 a.m.

Ken Roey discussed the plans under consideration for renovation or replacement of Mt. Hebron School. He said that staff would recommend an option costing nearly \$50 million which would add approximately 30,000 square feet and upgrade the systems in the school. The Board has not adopted a plan and may decide to wait a year for additional information, according to Board Chairperson Diane Mikulis. Greg Fox asked for follow-up information on the energy and maintenance savings estimated to be realized from each option under consideration. The Board also is requesting \$1.8 million for a survey of high school facilities.

Mary Kay Sigaty requested an update on unfunded state and federal mandates. Among the items listed were the new immunization schedule; full day kindergarten, which has both an operating and capital component; new course requirements for technology education; new English Language Learners assessments; and new assistance courses for high school students who have not yet passed tests required for graduation.

Larry Cohen summarized issues under consideration in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act. He noted that the National School Boards Association has a list of forty reforms it is proposing, chief among them is improved federal funding.

Ken Roey described a plan to provide additional parking for Running Brook Elementary School, where inadequate parking has resulted in intrusions into the neighborhoods and poor traffic flow. The proposed resolution depends upon approval by the Columbia Association for the use of adjacent land.

John Connors, Internal Auditor for the Board of Education, described his work with the schools to improve financial accounting. He has completed audits of eight schools and is focusing on the school activity funds, which collectively have \$30 million in transactions annually. He is focusing on internal controls and on areas of weakness identified by external auditors previously.

In a discussion of future joint meetings, there was agreement to continue to meet at 8:15 a.m., to avoid including items on the agenda particular to a single district, and to include in advance as much elaboration of questions as possible and as much background from the Board on questions as possible.

No decisions were made nor action taken at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.