*Submitted by Tom Puglisi*

*Note: Location, Dorchester Career and Technology Center. Supporting documents may be found on the DCPS Board Docs website at* [*https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public*](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/dcps/Board.nsf/Public)

The Board met in Closed Executive Session at 3:00 pm to discuss personnel, negotiations, legal matters, and administrative functions. Board President Susan Morgan opened the public meeting at 6:00 pm.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, review of the Board Calendar,1 recognition of student and teacher achievements,2 and reports from student representatives of the Dorchester Career and Technology Center, Cambridge South Dorchester HS, and North Dorchester HS. Board member Sheri Hubbard, legislative liaison for the Board, provided a short report on public education legislation being considered in the Maryland General Assembly.

Public Comments.

Speaker #1. The speaker expressed concern about opening an alternative school for elementary school children because it sends a message to children that they don’t belong.

Speaker #2. A Senior Education Advocate from the ACLU of Maryland opposed establishing an alternative elementary school because removing students from their schools does not improve behavior or academic performance. Creating an alternative elementary school would also raise equity concerns, especially given disparate DCPS suspensions and expulsions of black students, and would be illegal under Maryland law.

Speaker #3. An attorney from the Public Justice Center opposed establishing an alternative elementary school. The speaker questioned the effectiveness of alternative elementary schools and cited DCPS suspension and expulsion rates for black students, indicating that a separate elementary school filled primarily with black students would result in racial segregation that would violate both Federal and State law.

Speaker #4. The President of Dorchester County Educators stressed that DCPS students are making progress in their learning, even if they are still performing below grade level. The speaker emphasized that DCPS teachers are dedicated and hard-working. The speaker stressed that DCPS must respect its teachers, and that Board members should be careful when speaking in public about teacher quality and performance.

Speaker #5. A representative of Free State PTA discussed the organization’s commitment to value all students, respect for every student, and accountability in advancing parent interests in fostering student achievement. Free State PTA is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in education, and advocates for support and resources for all students.

Written Comment #1. A writer from Disability Rights Maryland expressed serious concerns about establishing an alternative elementary school and noted that placement in such a school would be considered suspension and would be illegal under Maryland law and Federal disability requirements.

Written Comment #2. A parent expressed concern about undue difficulty in obtaining materials for in-home learning and encouraged programs to support alternative opportunities for high school students.

Consent Agenda. The Board unanimously approved the

The Board unanimously approved the following items: Consent agenda (February 16 Work Session and Board meeting minutes; personnel action (appointment of Mr. Gavin Parker as Interim Principal of Maces Lane MS); acceptance of two grants from MSDE and three grants from the City of Cambridge Police Department (totaling $265,000); cafeteria tables for Sandy Hill ES ($43,711.50, Food Service surplus); ESMEC Health Insurance Alliance Trustee for Dorchester County Board of Education (Dr. Collins); School Calendar for SY23-24;3 Internet and WAN Services E-Rate (5-year period, $1,314,120); 450 Student Acer TravelMate computers ($192,600); security fencing for Choptank ES ($51,776); and the amended FY2024 Capital Improvement Plan (deferring Warwick Elementary ES roof replacement pending the outcome of the feasibility study).

The Board approved the following items by a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed: Cafeteria tables for North Dorchester HS ($68,689.50, Food Service surplus) with existing tables going to Choptank ES; proposed FY2024 Capital Budget ($3,447,060) and Operating Budget ($89,691,906, consisting of General Fund - $80,951,912, Restricted Grants - $5,164,351; and Food Service Fund - $3,575,643.).

The Board voted to defer approval of 425 Student Dell Latitude 3330 Laptops for Incoming 9th Grade Students ($376,975,) pending review of a less expensive option to be presented at the April 13 Board Work Session.

The monthly Appropriation & Expenditures Report projected a surplus at the end of the year. The Capital Projects Report listed projects continuing as expected.

Board Member Comments.

Dr. Stafford thanked the student representatives and those who spoke about elementary alternative schools. She stressed that we have some fantastic teachers in this county, often working under difficult conditions. Her goal is to ensure that all students have the same opportunities at all schools. She thanked Mr. Haig for his work on the feasibility study congratulated North Dorchester HS on its excellent school play. Her ending quotation: “I am committed to doing what is right, not what is popular.”

Dr. Morgan. “None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody — a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns — bent down and helped us pick up our boots.” -- Justice Thurgood Marshall

We hear a lot about people who pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, but did they really? Somewhere along the line, their parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent or even foster parent gave them something that helped them become the person they are. If not a relative, it could have been another person in their lives who helped them. The other night on the Oscars, one of the winners thanked a short list of their teachers, he wanted them to see that telling him he couldn’t do something made him work that much harder to do it.

Now, I don’t advocate anyone telling a child that they can’t achieve something, but sometimes we do that inadvertently with tales of “when I was a child, I had to do this…”, the intimation is that you don’t have it as hard as I did. Personally, I think students today have a tougher time in ways that I never had to face in school. They are bombarded with media of the likes I didn’t see until adulthood. They deal with pressures from many more sources than I did. Some hear gunfire when they are home or in bed but are expected to get up the next day and go to school as if it is a regular day. Today, we as parents and educators need to think about that when we work with our children.

I use the term ‘our children’ because I believe that it does take a village to raise and educate a child. We all have a part and as such, we need to do all we can to make sure that this generation has what it needs to prepare them for the world they will face after they graduate.

I do want to thank everyone who came tonight, those who spoke and those who didn’t, as well as the people at home watching. I’m glad that you care enough to be involved. I also want to thank our student members. You add much by your comments, and often just the way your respond to comments made by other members. Forgive me for taking more time than usual. I hope you have a good evening.

Superintendent’s Comments. Mr. Bromwell thanked all those who attended in person or via livestream, the DCPS executive team, Ms. Dayton, all those who took part in the Blueprint Planning process, the budget process, discussions regarding an alternative program, as well as employees involved in the school testing programs and after school programs. He noted that he will soon release a video in which he describes the current feasibility process.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.25 pm.

*Notes*

1BOARD CALENDAR

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| --- | --- |
| Monday, March 20, 2023 | Early Dismissal for StudentsHalf-Day Professional Development for Teachers |
| March 23 – March 26, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.2:00 p.m. – 3/26/2022 | C-SDHS Senior Class Play -  “Peter and the Star Catcher”C-SDHS Auditorium |
| Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 5:00 p.m. | Teacher of the Year and First-Class Teacher of the Year Annual Award Reception, East New Market Fire Hall |
| Wednesday, April 5, 2023, 5:00 p.m. | Community Design Team (CDT), DCTC |
| Thursday, April 6, 2023, 5:00 p.m. | Community Design Team (CDT), DCTC |
| Thursday, April 6, 2023 | Early Dismissal for StudentsHalf-Day Professional Development for Teachers |
| April 7 – 10, 2023 | Central Office & School Offices Closed - Spring Break |
| April 7 - 14, 2023 | Schools Closed - Spring Break (except 12-month employees) |
| Thursday, April 13, 2023, 4:00 p.m. | Board Work Session, Dorchester County Board of Education |
| Monday, April 17, 2923 | Schools Reopen for Students |
| Thursday, April 20, 2023, 6:00 p.m. | April Meeting of the Dorchester County Board of Education, DCTC |

2RECOGNITIONS

The following 2023 Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Program Distinguished Scholars ranked in the top 10% of all test takers nationally. Medical Interventions: Emilee Cohee and Landon Green. Principles of Biomedical Science: Zachary Bozman, Savannah Elzey, Thomas Foxwell III, Nate Fraccaroli, Camryn Higgins, Chloe Hoxter, Noah Kujat, Marion San Juan, Izzy Trissell, and Savannah Weber

The following Music Teachers’ students were selected as members of the All-Shore Band, All-Shore Chorus, and All-State Chorus: Alison Rodrigues (MLMS), Stephen Bragg (NDMS), Ray Washington (CSDHS), Scott Bunting (NDHS), and Karen Mercer (NDHS).

The following students were recognized for their musical achievements. Junior All-STATE Chorus: Jayden Coleman (NDHS). Junior All Shore Band: Ashlynn Burton (NDMS), Don’Meir Evans-Cephas (MLMS), and Landon Shufelt (NDMS). Senior All-Shore Band: Alan Limon-Sanchez and Darnell Matthews, Jr. (CSDHS); Julia Creighton, Axel Piaseck, Hailey Stivers, and Sydney Weir (NDHS). Senior All Shore Chorus: Hope Benjamin, Zachary Bozman, Jayden Coleman, Ava Collins , Anna Colquhoun, Jaden Condon, Savannah Elzey, Makayla Faulkner, Jevon Gibbs, Alexis Hayward, Madison Horsman, Abigail Jarrell, Matthew Kimball, Manny Reyes Dominquez, Erin Rideout, Melissa Sullivan, and Madisyn White (NDHS).

32023-2024 School Year Calendar

