*Submitted by Tom Puglisi*

*Note: 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 went into 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 and review of the Board Calendar (see below). President Morgan announced the resignation of Board Member Laura Layton and the announcement to be posted on the DCPS website of the process to replace her The Board recognized Pre-Kindergarten accreditation by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for all seven DCPS elementary schools The Board also commended Briana Beulah of Sandy Hill ES as 2023-2024 DCPS Teacher of the Year, and Wendi Bleyer of Sandy Hill ES as 2023-2024 First-Class Teacher of the Year. Student representatives of North Dorchester High School, Cambridge South Dorchester High School, and the Dorchester Career and Technology Center presented their activity reports.

Public Comments.

Four individuals spoke in person and five individuals submitted written comments about the Countywide Feasibility and Master Plan meeting held the night before. All responded strongly and negatively about the Feasibility and Planning process and its probable outcomes, citing lack of transparency and failure to appreciate the views of parents, especially parents of children attending well-performing schools. Parents believed that plans to close and/or combine schools had already been adopted, because the consultants hired by DCPS suggested three options for reducing the system’s square footage at the last Board Work Session. Parents threatened to take their children out of DCPS if successful schools where children strive are harmed as a result of any reorganization. Parents were especially concerned about the future of South Dorchester School. It was suggested that closing schools will not solve the system’s longstanding behavior and academic problems.

Three teachers from Choptank ES spoke about crisis conditions at the school what have deteriorated so much that Choptank no longer feels like a safe place for students, teachers, and staff. Teachers explained that they do not have the tools to help their students and indicated that they have seen no effective assistance coming from DCPS. The stated strongly that Choptank ES desperately needs immediate help.

President Morgan and other Board members clarified that the Board was not satisfied with the process and preliminary options presented at last week’s Board Work Session by the external consultants for the Countywide Feasibility and Master Plan process. As a result, the Board directed that the process be stopped and reworked because the consultants and their community design participants had not been given and were not able to evaluate all the information needed to develop viable options. The Board has made no planning decisions and will make no such decisions until input from all communities has been received and evaluated. At the same time, members indicated that everyone must understand that we cannot continue to pour millions of dollars into school buildings that are 80 years old and that developing a long-range plan for DCPS is critical for future success. Long-range planning has been put off for too long and the current Board will have to make some difficult decisions in the months ahead.

Ms. Sheri Hubbard, legislative liaison for the Board, provided a short report of the impact of the Maryland General Assembly on public education in the State of Maryland. Among other actions, the legislature approved funding for Blueprint improvements and building construction and strengthening teacher hiring and retention.

Consent Agenda. The Board approved the meeting and work session minutes for March 16, April 9, and April 13, 2023, as well as the acceptance of a $50,000 grant from MSDE for Support Staff bonuses and a $10,000 grant from DCHD to support adolescent health initiatives.

Board Actions.

* Personnel nominations from the Superintendent were approved by a 4-0 vote, and newly appointed teachers and administrators were introduced.
* Purchase of Clear Backpacks and Water Bottles ($89,790) for mandated use as a safety measure were approved by a 4-0 vote. Board members indicated that the consequences for not using the mandated backpacks need to be defined and enforced systematically at all schools and that MSDE discipline guidelines must be followed. Student representatives indicated that they liked the idea of the school backpacks but that the mandate must be implemented consistently system-wide.
* Purchase of the Navigate360 - PBIS Rewards System ($29,640) was approved by a 4-0 vote.
* Purchase of i-Ready Math Assessment & Personalized Instruction system from Curriculum Associates ($267,283 for a 3-year contract) was approved by a 4-0 vote
* Purchase of K-Algebra II Mathematics Curriculum and Resources system from Imagine Learning ($331,331 for a 3-year contract) was approved by a 4-0 vote.
* Specialized Education Services of Maryland, Inc. ($747,495 for three High Roads special education contracted classrooms for the 2023-24 school year at $27,685 per student for up to 9 students per classroom).  Approved 3-1.
* Tray line replacements for Hurlock, Sandy Hill, Vienna, and Warwick Elementary Schools ($161,888) were approved by a 4-0 vote.
* Delmarva Document Solutions / Xerox Corporation charges ($1,235,445) for a 5-year equipment lease to include maintenance and color copying were approved by a 4-0 vote.
* Lightspeed Internet Filter, Alert and Classroom Management system charges ($144,645 for 5 years) were approved by a 4-0 vote.
* Purchase or replacement iPads for Teachers and Students ($104,650) was approved by 4-0 vote.

The Board was presented within information regarding the Virtual Day Instructional Plan (for up to 8 days) for the 2023-2024 School Year required by MSDE (public comment being solicited), guidelines for the provision of School-based mental health services by A New Day Management, LLC, and routine reports on appropriation and expenditures (end-of-year surplus anticipated), capital projects and technology spending, and quarterly grant balances (on track to spend as projected). The Board Budget Committee will participate with the Superintendent and the CFO in a detailed review of all current grants.

Board Members congratulated those recognized tonight, especially the recently accredited Pre-kindergarten programs, the newly appointed teachers and administrators, and the students who received their white laboratory coats earlier this week. Members stressed that they hope to create a school system with which the entire community can be proud. They thanked members of the South Dorchester community and all those who participated in the meeting tonight. Board members reiterated that the Board is not pleased with the Facilities and Master Plan process to date and that the process will be reworked to be as transparent as possible. They encouraged the community to participate fully in that process. Student Board representatives thanked the Board for letting them participate and express their opinions and for the opportunity to see how the system works. The Superintendent thanked everyone for participating, either in person or via live stream, and echoed the above comments from Board Members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

**UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Monday, April 24, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Educational Equity Task Force Awards Night  Zion Baptist Church  600 Cross St., Cambridge |
| Wednesday, April 26, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Educational Equity Task Force Awards Night  Hurlock United Methodist Church  502 S. Main St., Hurlock |
| Tuesday, May 2, 2023  5:00 p.m. | Community Design Team (CDT)  Dorchester Career and Technology Center |
| May 8 - 12, 2023 | Teacher Appreciation Week |
| Monday May 8, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Regional Community Meetings - Countywide Feasibility Study  NDHS Auditorium |
| Tuesday, May 9, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Regional Community Meetings - Countywide Feasibility Study  C-SDHS Auditorium |
| Wednesday, May 10, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Regional Community Meetings - Countywide Feasibility Study  South Dorchester School PreK-8 |
| Thursday, May 11, 2023  4:00 p.m. | Board Work Session at the  Dorchester County Board of Education |
| Monday, May 15, 2023 | Early Dismissal for Students  Half-Day Professional Development for Teachers |
| Tuesday, May 16, 2023  5:00 p.m. | Community Design Team (CDT)  Cambridge-South Dorchester High School |
| Thursday, May 18, 2023  6:00 p.m. | Regular May Meeting of the  Dorchester County Board of Education  DCTC |